The EMS™

Support Ukraine

Emsworth Residents Forum
Community Newspaper

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Town Council – have your say

Havant Borough Council (HBC) have begun the process which could lead to Emsworth having its own Town (Parish) Council by May 2027.

Have your say on the future of community governance of Emsworth
You have the chance to shape how residents of Emsworth are represented in local decision-making by taking part in the first stage of consultation for the Community Governance Review (CGR) for Emsworth. The CGR has been triggered by the Emsworth Neighbourhood Forum and, as the principal council for the area, Havant Borough Council is now conducting the review in line with legislative requirements.

What is community governance?
Community governance is the way local people and communities are represented and have a voice in decisions that affect their area. It can take different forms, such as a parish (town) council, an area committee or neighbourhood forum, but must always seek to reflect the identities and interests of the community, and be effective and convenient for local people.

About CGR
The review process takes around a year to complete and as part of the procedure, there will be two rounds of consultation (unless the first phase shows no appetite for any changes) with Emsworth residents, workers and visitors to ensure that any final recommendations reflect the views of those who live, work and visit the area.

The review aims to understand whether the Emsworth community feels that new ways for community governance are required, and if so what those new ways of community representation should look like. Following these rounds of consultation, final recommendations based on this feedback will be voted upon by Councillors at Havant Borough Council.

How to find out more and take part
Information about the potential options for community governance on Emsworth, including changes to Council Tax, details on how a parish council operates and what other options are available for Emsworth, can be found on our website: www.havant.gov.uk/cgr

The online survey launched on Monday 5 January 2026 and is now open until Monday 23 March. This is your opportunity to shape and influence the future of community governance for Emsworth. Alternatively, paper copies of the CGR survey and supporting materials can be collected from Emsworth Library or Emsworth Community Centre, with a pre-paid envelope to return to the council free of charge. Additionally, anyone can call 023 9244 6019 to provide responses to the survey over the phone.

Anyone who would like to speak to council officers and ask questions about the process is welcome to attend one of the face-to-face exhibition events being held at Emsworth Baptist Church on the following dates:

- **Tuesday 10 February 2026, 3pm to 7pm**
- **Tuesday 10 March 2026, 3pm to 7pm**

ERF saves the Town Clock

Words by Dwynwen Stepien

Emsworth's iconic Town Clock faced an unexpected crisis this summer when its monthly electricity bill soared from £15 to a staggering £515. Emsworth Residents Forum (ERF), which holds the account for the clock's supply, was left grappling with the sudden increase after energy provider SSE changed the way it billed unmetered supplies in August. What followed was four months of frustration, with repeated emails and phone calls failing to cut through the bureaucracy. The clock, often referred to as the Clock Tower in St Peter's Square, is more than a timepiece. Mounted on what was once Emsworth Town Hall — originally built in 1790 as St Peter's Chapel — it has stood as a civic landmark since the early 20th century. Today, the building beneath houses Cross Kitchen Café, but the clock remains a familiar symbol of continuity in the town's historic centre.

With the ERF struggling to resolve the issue, local building owner Tim Doran stepped forward. He arranged for an electrician to reconfigure the supply, ensuring the clock's electricity would now be billed through the building rather than as a separate account. His intervention secured the future of the clock and ended months of uncertainty. In a welcome conclusion, SSE's Complaints Department showed sympathy and waived all charges once the resolution was agreed. For residents, the Town Clock represents more than hours and minutes. It is a living link between Emsworth's past governance and its present-day community spirit — a reminder that heritage endures when people care enough to protect it.

Development

New HBC Planning Portal

Havant Borough Council has now moved to a new software system for case management across Planning Development, Licensing and Environmental Health.

This has been up and running since mid-December. To check current and past planning applications go to:

https://service.havant.gov.uk/pr/s/register-view?c__r=Arcus_BE_Public_Register

Railway Inn tries again

Application APP/25/00704, former Railway Inn, 95 North Street, Emsworth, for change of use from class E (Drinking Establishment), with guest rooms and ancillary manager accommodation to use Class C3 Residential, to provide 6 self-contained flats with internal and external alterations. This site has a complex planning history and several attempts have been made to develop the site since the pub closed in 2021. An application to convert the building into flats for supported living was approved back in 2022 but was not taken forward. There have already been several objections to this new proposal from local residents who are concerned about parking in the narrow streets near the former pub.

Mary Puppins pet shop move refused again

A new application, APP/25/00700, for change of use of Unit 1, Palmers Road, Emsworth, from temporary B2 (manufacturing and repairs) to Class E Commercial including retail has been refused. The original application, APP/25/00113, was refused but went to appeal, see AP-0361, which is still being decided. Unit 1 was previously used for motorcycle repairs. Mary Puppins have been trading from 20 High Street since 2020.

Double glazing showroom for Palmers Road

APP/25/00697 24 Palmers Road, Emsworth for change of use from motor-trade purposes to a showroom for viewing Window and Door units manufactured by others for both domestic and commercial use. Unit 24, Palmers Road was being offered for sale at £420,000. The 2,534 sq ft workshop and yard has previously been used for car repairs by AD Williams. There have been several objections from local residents who are concerned about parking in the area.

Planning applications

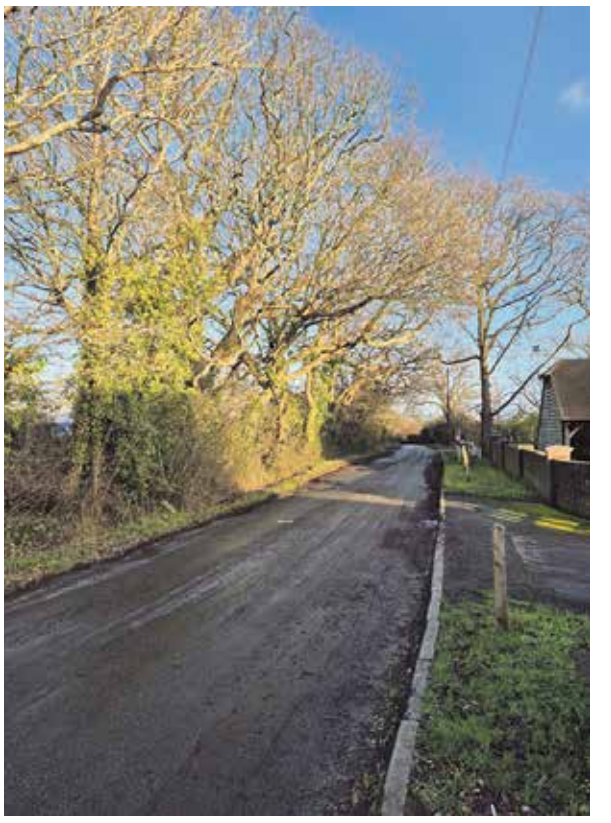
Application APP/24/00987 for the demolition of existing dwelling and the construction of 5 new dwellings at Oklahoma, 4 Long Copse Lane, Emsworth was refused last year. The developers have now lodged an appeal, AP-0369, with Havant BC.

Interbridges

Application APP/24/01010 to build a small industrial estate at Interbridges East (land east of North St between the railway and the A27 bypass) is still under consideration by HBC.

Land North of Long Copse Lane - New rules, new challenges

Words by the Save Long Copse Lane Team



Despite the withdrawal of the planning application by Land & Partners to build 210 houses, the LCL site is still included in the Draft Local Plan. HBC argue that LCL is required for the plan to be viable. However, HBC recognise that the overall housing target cannot be met and the deficit will be reflected in the final draft for inspection.

Our view is that the LCL site should be removed from the plan now, even if the deficit increases. The LCL site is unsuitable, since it does not contribute to the local housing need, is not sustainable and reports commissioned by HBC have recommended that the site should not be developed.

Retaining the site in the plan gives greater weight to its approval and could set a precedent allowing other sensitive sites to be considered for development since there is no prospect of housing target reduction in future years. We also share the view that ever-growing traffic levels within the whole of Emsworth are a major concern. Generating significant traffic from the most Northerly point within Emsworth seems unwise when access to the main East/West traffic routes are at southerly points and already there are bottlenecks with little prospect of improvement.

The Infrastructure & Housing Bill, when passed, will present us with new and serious challenges. It introduces a Nature Recovery Levy, paid by developers but administered by Natural England, to fund environmental restoration on a wider scale, rather than site by site. However, the Levy is intended to work alongside existing environment protection legislation. To accelerate planning decisions, the Bill may allow delegated decision making, such as by planning Officers. This may not work in our favour.

The Save LCL strategy is to lobby our Councillors to have the site removed from the Draft Local plan before inspection. An outline Local Development Scheme for plan publication and inspection can be found on the HBC website by searching for LDS.

Westbourne celebrates first purpose built community-led affordable housing scheme in Chichester District

A ground-breaking £3.6m community-led project to deliver 12 new affordable homes for local people in Westbourne has now been completed by Westbourne Community Trust. Located in Westbourne and named Hitchcock Close in memory of a founding trustee, the development includes six one-bed homes, four two-bed homes and two three-bed homes. Construction began late last year, and the project's completion was celebrated by partners at a special event to welcome the new tenants on 21 November 2025.

The project was led by Westbourne Community Trust, a group of local residents who formed this community group seven years ago with the intention of providing affordable homes for local people and community projects to improve the quality of life in Westbourne. The Trust received support from Chichester District Council, which provided both the land for the development and grant funding to assist with construction costs. Additional support was also provided by Westbourne Parish Council, the South Downs National Park Authority, The St Mary's Hospital Trust, and Homes England.

Westbourne is the first Community Land Trust in the Chichester District to build its own homes. The completed scheme offers housing for local residents who cannot afford to buy or rent on the open market, with the rent set at approximately 55% of market rent levels for the area. These homes will never be subject to the right to buy and will be retained permanently for social rent. In addition to providing 12 homes, the Trust has upgraded the adjoining park with new play equipment and facilities. It has also provided a storage building for the benefit of the Westbourne Allotment Association and Westbourne Parish Council. This scheme is part of a wider effort by Chichester District Council to support community-led housing across the district.

A development of 12 new affordable homes at Westbourne have been completed

Anyone interested in finding out more about the Westbourne community-led housing scheme and Westbourne CLT can visit: www.westbournecommunitytrust.org

Hayling Islanders debate future of local voice

With Havant Borough Council and Hampshire County Council set to disappear in 2028, Hayling Islanders are asking how their community will retain a strong democratic voice. Currently, Hayling is represented by seven councillors (6 at HBC and 1 at HCC). Under local government reorganisation this number could fall to just two or three, competing among nearly 100 councillors at the new Greater Portsmouth Unitary Council.

Supporters of a Hayling Town Council argue that without a local body, the island risks being overlooked and ignored. A Town Council (legally the same as a Parish Council) holds statutory powers that other bodies do not; for example, Community or Neighbourhood Boards are temporary, existing briefly for a higher authority's allocated projects until their funding ceases. In contrast a Hayling Town Council must be consulted on planning matters; it could also step in to protect land and buildings for community use should the new unitary authority be under pressure to sell off the island's assets to balance its budget.

A Town Council is not only able to manage and protect its public spaces, it also has the authority to raise funds and secure grants to support their upkeep and development. This ensures that local facilities are properly maintained and that the community can benefit from additional investment. Run by elected local volunteers, such councils are non-party political and directly accountable to

residents. Critics sometimes suggest a parish council is just another layer of bureaucracy. Campaigners counter that there is little overlap with the large unitary authority. Instead, a local council would focus only on services that matter to Hayling, which a larger, more remote authority may struggle to deliver efficiently.

Funding would come from a small precept added to Council Tax bills. The average locally is around £92 a year for a Band D property — less than £2 a week. Importantly, islanders themselves would decide how much the council does and how much it spends. As the countdown to 2028 continues, campaigners stress that Hayling must act now to secure its future voice.

"Don't leave it to luck to bring us the Hayling Town Council we need," supporters urge.

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Emsworth Town (Parish) Council Petition Moves Forward

Momentum is building behind the campaign for an Emsworth Town Council, with enough signatures now collected to trigger a formal Community Governance Review (CGR). The petition, organised by Emsworth Residents Forum (ERF), was submitted to Havant Borough Council (HBC) in October. At the same time, Hayling Island residents submitted a similar petition for their own town council.

Emsworth stands at a crossroads. In just a few years, Havant Borough Council will be abolished. Without action, our town risks losing influence over the decisions that shape our daily lives. But there is a solution: a Town Council for Emsworth. This would mean decisions made by people who live here, who understand our needs, and who care about our future. It would give us rights to protect local assets, bid for funding, and ensure our voice is not lost in a larger authority.

The consultation begins on 5 January 2026 (see P1) It is vital that every resident takes

enough signatures have been collected to trigger a formal Community Governance Review

part. If we don't speak up, others will decide for us. Together, we can keep Emsworth's voice strong. Together, we can secure a Town Council for our community. More details, including the full timetable and information on CGRs, can be found on the Havant Borough Council website under Community Governance Reviews – Havant Borough Council. Residents wishing to support the campaign can contact the ERF Chair at chair.erf@gmail.com.

We asked colleagues in Westbourne and Clanfield to tell us about their parish councils. We are also working closely with colleagues at Hayling who hope to have their own Town Council by 2027.

Clanfield Parish Council: Investing in Community Spirit

Establishing and supporting the community remains at the heart of Clanfield Parish Council's work, with over 50 acres of land and property managed for residents across the parish. The council's portfolio includes four children's playgrounds, allotments, football pitches, recreation grounds, open spaces, and two major community facilities. The Parish Office is based at The Clanfield Centre, serving as the hub for local governance. Clanfield Parish Council also runs a grants programme to support community and voluntary organisations. Looking ahead, the council plans to launch a Youth Council, introduce a Community Award Scheme, progress a Public Art Project, and deliver initiatives focused on the environment and biodiversity.

The council currently has 10 members, with two vacancies, and serves a population of 6,000. It is supported by Parish Clerk Katie Jones, who serves as Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer, alongside a part-time Assistant Clerk and Open Spaces Officer. Council business is conducted through 11 scheduled meetings each year (excluding August), plus the Annual Parish Meeting in April, as well as 4 committees. For 2025/26, Clanfield Parish Council has set its annual precept at a Band D equivalent of £92.22 per household, an increase of 7.4% compared to last year. This means a typical household contributes just under £100 annually to fund local services.

Wikipedia

The precept covers:

- Clerk's salary and administration (including insurance, audit fees, subscriptions, and training)
- Maintenance of community facilities such as allotments, recreation grounds, and village spaces
- Local projects including environmental improvements, community events, and small grants

"Clanfield is a great place to live," said Parish Clerk, Katie Jones. "Our council is committed to ensuring residents benefit from well-managed facilities, vibrant community projects, and a strong sense of local identity."

Southbourne Parish Council

Southbourne's work demonstrates how local governance supports everyday life — from playgrounds and allotments to grants for community services. By balancing representation, wellbeing, and service delivery, the council ensures residents' needs remain at the centre of decision-making. With a population 8,113 the council's work touches many aspects of daily life in the parish. The council's activities fall into three main categories:

- Representation – ensuring residents' voices are heard on planning and local government matters
- Community Wellbeing – supporting initiatives that enhance quality of life
- Service Delivery – maintaining facilities and services directly for the community

The council owns and runs several key assets: the recreation ground that includes a football pitch, pavilion, and children's playground; allotments; open spaces: street lighting and litter bins. It also uses developer contributions (CIL) to improve drainage, open spaces, and local facilities and provides financial grants including the Bourne Community Bus and family services. The council influences several areas such as planning matters and roads and travel, including working with West Sussex County Council on issues like traffic calming and road works. Operations are financed primarily through the Parish Precept, a portion of Council Tax set annually by the council. The average precept for parishes in Chichester district in 2023/24 was £75.89.

Council News

New Chief Executive for Havant Borough Council

Matt Goodwin has been approved as the new Chief Executive for Havant Borough Council, following ratification at a Full Council meeting held on Wednesday 5 November. Matt Goodwin has served in several senior roles at HBC since first joining in 2018. He has extensive management experience developed from working with multiple organisations including West Sussex County Council, the National Health Service and Royal Mail.

Greens are now the third biggest party at Havant

Cllr Mark Coates (Hayling East) who was elected as a Labour candidate has now moved to the Green Party. HBC is run by a Labour/Lib Dem/Green coalition.

Sinking ship?

Two Havant councillors elected in 2024 as Conservatives have defected to Reform UK. They are Caren Diamond (Purbrook ward) and Gwen Robinson (Waterloo ward), who was the group leader. Current composition of HBC is:

- Labour 9
- Conservative 9
- Green 6
- Liberal Democrats 5
- Reform 4
- Independent 3

(The Independents consist of 2 former Tories and 1 ex Lib-Dem)

Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2025

www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2025

These statistics about deprivation were released in October 2025 and are the first update since 2019. They combine data on income, employment, education, health, crime, housing, and living environment. They show that 65% of local authority areas in England have at least one ward with high levels of deprivation.

Here is how our local areas compare with the rest of England

Ranking (1 = most deprived area)

1 Middlesborough

72 Portsmouth

81 Havant

95 Gosport

296 Joint bottom of table (no high level of deprivation in any ward) Chichester, Fareham and many others.

Better Lives Index

The International Longevity Centre (ILC) has produced the Better Lives Index which ranks local authority areas on various measures of good living. The highest scoring area was Hart (Northern Hampshire) with an overall ranking of 1. The lowest scoring area in Britain was East Lindsey (Eastern Lincolnshire) ranked at 359.

https://ilcuk.org.uk/uk-better-lives-index/

Category	Havant	Chichester	Portsmouth
Life expectancy at birth	81.8	82.5	80.5
Life expectancy at 65	20.2	20.7	18.8
Child poverty	21.2%	14%	23.5%
Economic activity (16+)	47.5%	46.9%	64.5%
Gross domestic household income	£22,106	£29,357	£19,388
Housing costs house price to earnings ratio	10.5	16	8.2
Economic inactivity (50 - 64)	33%	46%	25%
Overall ranking out of 359	209	201	212

Local councils say no to postponing 2026 elections

Council leaders across Hampshire have made clear they have no plans to ask for next year's local elections to be postponed. Local government minister Alison McGovern wrote to 63 local authority chiefs in England on 18 December asking for their views on deferring May's polls for a year. The Labour government has been accused of "running scared" of the electorate, with one civic chief labelling the situation an "absolute democratic disgrace".

Across Hampshire, 11 councils are scheduled to have elections on May 7, 2026.

Of the nine that have responded to the Local Democracy Reporting Service, all have said they do not plan to ask for a postponement.

Polls for Hampshire County Council had already been pushed back 12 months, having previously been scheduled to take place in May 2025 before they were cancelled by the government. Hampshire County Council leader Nick Adams-King, Conservative, said: "I have been clear that county elections are vital for local democracy and accountability. I have not, and will not, ask for an election postponement."

Electoral Commission chief executive Vijay Rangarajan said scheduled elections should only be postponed in exceptional circumstances. Mr Rangarajan said: "As a matter of principle, we do not think that capacity constraints are a legitimate reason for delaying long-planned elections. Extending existing mandates risks affecting the legitimacy of local decision-making and damaging public confidence."

(BBC Local Democracy Reporting Service)

Food waste collections coming to Havant Borough

The collection of food waste, planned to be rolled out in Spring 2026, will be carried out on behalf of Havant Borough Council through a partnership with Portsmouth City Council. A new collection service will be introduced, with the pilot scheme initially running in a specific area within the borough. This major change to how we deal with food waste will help residents recycle more, reduce what goes to energy recovery, and turn leftovers into something genuinely useful.

Working with Portsmouth City Council, food waste will be collected weekly by a different crew, on the same days as current rubbish and recycling collections. The food waste will then be sent for anaerobic digestion. The decision to introduce the new collections reflects the implementation set out in the government's Simpler Recycling reforms introduced under the Environment Act 2021, which aims to reduce food waste, improve recycling rates and help address climate change.

The types of food waste that will be collected separately include:

- Fruit and vegetable peelings, cores, and skins
- Plate scrapings and food scraps, including eggshells
- Bread, rice, and pasta that can no longer be eaten
- Teabags and coffee grounds
- Cooked or raw meat and fish that can no longer be eaten, including bones

We are not encouraging residents to throw away edible food; the service is intended for unavoidable food waste only.

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In Physio-led Yoga, poses can be adapted to accommodate individual needs.
Beginner/Intermediate classes at 9:30am every Tuesday at Emsworth Community Centre (term time only)
All class members will be assessed.
It will be a progressive class, booked per half term.
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Please contact: **Melissa Robinson** (Chartered Physiotherapist)
melissa.robinson@astilbe.co.uk
Or text to: **07977 466924**

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Words by BBC Local Democracy Reporting Service

Local Government Reform

Hampshire Mayoral elections postponed until May 2028

The government unexpectedly announced on 4 December that the mayoral elections in Hampshire and Sussex would be postponed until May 2028. The elections for the mayor for Hampshire and Sussex were expected to take place on 7 May 2026.

When these elections are eventually held they will use the supplementary vote (SV) system which is currently used for Police and Crime Commissioner elections. Under SV there are two columns of boxes alongside the candidates' names on the ballot paper. One column of boxes is for voters to mark their favourite candidate with an X and one in which to mark a second favourite with an X. Voters don't have to mark a second favourite. With the Supplementary Vote, if no candidate gets over 50% of the vote, the top two candidates continue to a run-off and all other candidates are eliminated. When casting their ballot voters can put a second choice (who they would vote for in a runoff) on the original ballot paper. If your favourite candidate gets through, your vote is counted for them in the run-off. If they didn't, but your second choice did, your vote goes to them. The run-off candidate with the most votes is declared the winner.

All the major parties had announced their candidates for the Hampshire Mayoral elections prior to the government statement.

Greens

Dr Anna Collar is an archaeologist living in Lyndhurst who works as an associate professor at the University of Southampton

Conservatives

Donna Jones, the current Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight

Labour

Councillor Lorna Fielker represents the Swaythling ward on Southampton City Council and was the leader between Jan 2024 and May 2025

Independents

Independent councillors have said there could be a 'democratic deficit' in mayoral elections because of the high cost of standing. Candidates who want to run to be the mayor will have to pay a £5,000 deposit and will lose it if they don't poll 5% of the vote.

Reform UK

Rear Admiral Dr Chris Parry was an aviator and warfare officer who served in the Royal Navy for over 30 years

Lib Dems

Councillor Martin Tod, leader of Winchester City Council

Make sure your postal vote still counts

Postal votes will now expire after three years, so if you applied to vote by post before 31 October 2023, you'll need to reapply by 31 January 2026 to continue.

If you haven't reapplied by 31 January 2026, your postal vote will be cancelled and you'll receive confirmation of this in February.

The easiest way to reapply for your postal vote is to go to:

www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote

You'll just need your date of birth, National Insurance number and a signature.

You can also download a paper form and return it by email or post to, Electoral Registration, Havant BC, Public Service Plaza, Civic Centre Road, Havant, PO9 2AX

If you no longer want to vote by post tell the Elections Office as soon as possible to help reduce unnecessary waste.

Email: elections.office@havant.gov.uk
Telephone: 023 9244 6225

Funding for mayoral authorities

The government has announced the annual amount of money allocated for each mayoral area:

Hampshire and the Solent Combined County Authority: £44.6m per year

Sussex and Brighton Combined County Authority: £38m per year

PCC to end by 2028

Police and Crime Commissioners are to be scrapped in England and Wales to save £100m over this parliament, the government has said. The Home Office said that less than 20% of voters can name their PCC, with Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood describing the system as a 'failed experiment'. There are currently 41 commissioners under the system, introduced 12 years ago by former Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron. The role will move to either an elected mayor or council leaders at the end of the commissioners' terms in 2028. The Home Office said the saving will allow them to invest an extra £20m in front-line policing every year, which it said was enough for 320 constables.

Police force amalgamations within the next few years?

There are currently 43 police forces covering England and Wales. There have been reports that the government is looking at a major re-organisation which would create 12 regional forces. Currently Hampshire Constabulary (which covers Hants, Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight) has 3,200 officers. Sussex Constabulary (which covers East and West Sussex and Brighton) has 3,267 officers.

The last major reorganisation of police in England was in 1967. Prior to 1967 Portsmouth and Southampton had separate police forces from the rest of Hampshire.

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News from our Councillors

Green Party

Cllr Grainne Rason

Firstly, I hope everyone enjoyed a happy Christmas and New Year. The town looked wonderful once again — many of our shops created fantastic festive window displays that brought real cheer to the High Street. For some, the past year has been a particularly difficult one. We are lucky to have so many local businesses in Emsworth, but these remain challenging times. Our community is incredibly supportive, yet we also rely on visitors, and that means keeping our town clean, tidy, and welcoming.

Some of you may already know about the Wednesday Wombles. I'm one of them, and for nearly three years we've been collecting litter in Emsworth Park. Recently, however, our focus has shifted to the High Street as part of the Bin the Butt campaign, run by Jon Keynes in partnership with St James' Primary School throughout November and December. A cigarette butt may be small, but it's one of the most harmful forms of litter — just one dropped into an aquarium can kill all the fish within a week. Thanks to the campaign, more and more local businesses have put out dedicated bins for cigarette ends. There are still too many butts on the pavement, but encouragingly, more than 6,000 have now been placed in the bins or picked up by Jon, the schoolchildren, and the Wednesday Wombles.

P Czerwinski

More than 6,000 butts have been binned thanks to the campaign

I have also been working closely with Coastal Partners to understand how Havant can meet the growing challenges facing our harbour, particularly the impact of rising sea levels and the declining condition of this important natural asset. Alongside this, I am involved with Havant Community Energy, a volunteer-led group developing renewable energy projects designed to benefit local residents and strengthen our community's resilience.

If you're interested in learning more or getting involved, please do get in touch — new volunteers and fresh ideas are always welcome.

Cllr Reuben Mychaleckyj

I recently visited the River Ems with Sarah Hughes, Chalk Stream Resilience Officer for the Ems & Hambrook, and it was both inspiring and sobering. The Ems is a rare chalk stream, internationally important, yet fragile. Walking its course with Sarah, it was clear how far the river has drifted from its natural state. Sarah explained her plans to reset the Ems to a more original flow, undoing years of modification that straightened channels and disconnected the river from its floodplain. A key part of this vision is to restore Brook Meadows as a functioning wetland once again. Re-wetting this landscape would slow the flow, store water in wetter months, reduce flooding downstream and provide vital habitat for birds, insects and fish. Healthy wetlands also improve water quality and help rivers survive dry periods. We discussed whether chalk winterbourne rivers always dried up. While some seasonal drying is natural, over-abstraction from our aquifers has made low flows longer, deeper and more damaging than in the past. As councillors and residents, we all have a role to play: using water wisely, fixing leaks, supporting sustainable water policies and backing local river restoration projects. Protecting the Ems means protecting our shared natural heritage — and ensuring this beautiful river flows for generations to come.

Cllr Charles Robert

A significant portion of my work as a councillor is casework. Requests come as emails, phone calls or through social media. In most cases the person asking for my help has exactly the same access to information that I have. There is no simple answer. Ideally I want residents to do their own research but I am aware that knowing where to look and who to ask is not always obvious. Part of the solution is raising awareness of where to look, this way empowering the resident to deal with a wider range of issues. Unfortunately some issues just aren't that simple. Some turn into long and complex problems with a debatable outcome, not always what a resident hoped for. Multiple layers of legislation, various Acts laid down over time, and lack of clarity about which body is responsible, all add to the length of time it can take to get a result. I do consider these more complex issues something of a challenge. They are ones that have taught me the most, about people, about systems and on occasions how to navigate to a successful outcome for the resident. My wish for 2026 is clearer, accurate, and up to date data systems that we can all search with ease.

Cllr Lulu Bowerman (Conservative)Emsworth & St Faiths (HCC) **See P27**

Will Emsworth Get a Town (Parish) Council?

By Cllr Grainne Rason

Support is growing across Emsworth for the creation of a town council, as residents consider how best to safeguard local representation ahead of major changes to local government. Under current legislation, all town councils are formally parish councils. Interest in establishing one for Emsworth has increased as awareness grows about the planned abolition of Havant Borough Council in 2028 and the implications this could have for local decision-making.

Compass Photography

Havant Borough Council will run a public consultation from 5 January to 29 March 2026, seeking residents' views on whether Emsworth should have a parish council and outlining what this could mean in practice.

Once the borough council is dissolved, Emsworth is expected to be represented by fewer councillors, with decisions taken at a more distant level of government. Many residents fear this could weaken the town's voice and reduce the influence of the community over issues affecting everyday life. The legal process to establish a parish council has already begun, but several key stages remain. Havant Borough Council will run a public consultation from 5 January to 29 March 2026, seeking residents' views on whether Emsworth should have a parish council and outlining what this could mean in practice.

If engagement in the consultation is low, the borough council could decide as early as April 2026 that a parish council is not required, bringing the process to a halt. Supporters of the proposal are therefore encouraging residents to take part and make their views known. If the consultation shows sufficient support, a second stage would follow. This would look in more detail at how a potential Emsworth council would be structured, which responsibilities it might take on, and how this could affect the local precept.

Those in favour argue that a parish council would allow decisions to be made closer to the community, while providing additional rights to bid for, challenge, and develop local assets and services for the benefit of Emsworth residents. Even with public backing, the proposal would still face a final hurdle. Havant borough councillors would need to vote in favour of establishing the parish council, and there remains some uncertainty over whether central government could restrict the creation of new councils.

Elsewhere, similar moves have proved popular. West Sussex County Council recently approved the formation of Horsham Parish Council, following support from around 75 per cent of residents who cited improved local decision-making and stronger community representation. Several other areas across Hampshire are also exploring the creation of parish councils, as communities look to maintain local connections and democratic access amid a shift towards larger unitary authorities.

For Emsworth, the upcoming consultations are likely to be crucial in determining whether the town gains a new layer of local representation or sees decisions increasingly made further afield.

Community

RNLI

The RNLI Autumn Coffee Morning on Saturday 15 November 2025 was a great success. The Emsworth and Havant Fundraising Branch raised £1221.01 on the day. Thank you to the many members of the public for your very generous donations. We are also very grateful for the generous donations from Tesco, to support our fundraising for the RNLI. We were also joined by Eric Harvey, who has built some very special model boats. These included a very detailed model of HMS Victory. The support of Emsworth Slipper Sailing Club, who provide us with the use of their lovely facilities, is always very much appreciated. The Emsworth and Havant Fundraising Branch of the RNLI will be holding their Annual Review Meeting on Tuesday 17 March 2026, 7pm, at Emsworth Slipper Sailing Club. As usual you are all welcome, so please come along and join us.

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For more information contact: bleedpacks@havantrotary.org.uk

News from Southbourne Lions
Words and Pictures by Vicki King

Supporting Girl Guides

Through community donations, Southbourne Lions were able to enable local Guides to attend the West Sussex International Jamboree 2025. Nine Guides and one Leader from 1st Emsworth Guides took part, joining thousands of Guides and Scouts from around the world. The Jamboree theme was Myths and Legends and some of the activities our

Alan Mak congratulates Emsworth resident Lord Richards on Field Marshal appointment

Local MP Alan Mak has congratulated Emsworth resident Lord Richards on being appointed a Field Marshal by His Majesty The King. He is now known as Field Marshal The Lord Richards of Herstmonceaux GCB CBE DSO DL after being appointed to this honorary rank in the British Army. The title of Field Marshal is the highest possible Army rank and recognises Lord Richards' distinguished service and commitment to the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth and overseas territories.

He was formerly the Chief of the Defence Staff, head of the British Armed Forces.

Guides took part in included driving a car; martial arts; a climbing wall; cooking on campfires; bumping into each other while inside inflatable balls; visiting a skatepark for skating and BMX; discos; talent show and much more.

The girls made lots of friends from around the world and particularly mentioned Germany, USA, New Zealand, Sri Lanka & Wales! They were very grateful for community funding support and said they'd thoroughly enjoyed the experience, learnt new skills and swapped Girlguiding badges.

They're already fund-raising for next year's trip to the WAGGGS (World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts) centre, Our Chalet, Switzerland.

Christmas

The Southbourne Lions Sleigh and Santa arrived at the Woodmancote Arms in a flurry of snow amid much excitement. He could not stay too long as he had a lot of areas to visit before Christmas including Hermitage, Southbourne, Nutbourne, Westbourne, and Bosham. Santa and his magnificent twinkling Sleigh brought much musical cheer and excitement to our communities, children and adults alike.

Funds that our community kindly donated are used throughout the year and distributed at Christmas to Headteachers in all seven of our primary schools and Bourne Community College in the form of Supermarket vouchers. Headteachers then provide these vouchers to those families most in need.

This is just one of the ways that Southbourne Lions, through the generous donations from our community, is able to provide support to local worthy causes.

If you would like to see information about our other activities take a look our website: http://southbournelions.uk

We are a friendly bunch and we welcome new members. Our email address: Membership@southbournelions.uk or phone 0345 8335816 - leave a message and we will get back to you.

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Community

The Sage House Wayfaring Bus is coming to Emsworth

Support for people living with dementia

Words by Theo Schofield

People living with dementia, both the person and their carers, have multiple needs. They can be very isolated, fearful and lack the information they require to cope with the challenges they face. The scale of the problem is large, and there is very little support from health services.

Dementia Friendly Emsworth is a group of local organisations which have been developing ways to overcome this. The Anna Cafe meets in St James' Hall on the third month of the month offering a light lunch, companionship, and support. The care company, Right at Home, has set up Singing for the Mind in the Pastoral Centre at 11am on the last Wednesday of the month; Dementia Friendly Gardening in the summer; and Dementia Friendly Bowls - all offering activities and companionship, but little information or advice.

Sage House is an independent local dementia charity based in Tangmere, which operates as a centre of excellence, with a hub providing a full range of services and spokes that reach out into local communities to be able to support even more people. These 'spokes' are support groups that meet regularly and the nearest one to Emsworth is in Southbourne.

Recently they have also launched their unique Dementia Advice Bus which brings their services into the local community. In the bus, which is really a mobile consulting room, people living with dementia can be given individual advice and support. The range of topics they can cover include how to cope with dementia, financial issues and planning, how to stay safe and warm at home, relationships, and many others.

The bus has had trial runs of visiting Emsworth at various locations, and the most successful was at the Sports and Social Club on the same afternoon as the bowling. They now intend to be there on the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month at 3pm. People can book an appointment or just drop in.

They also plan to take the bus to the Baptist Church, which is more central and prominent, and the dates will be advertised. We have worked hard to persuade them to come this far and to cross the county boundary, but we believe that this is an opportunity that should not be missed.

The bus is a mobile consulting room where people living with dementia can be given individual advice and support

PG Wodehouse Statue Gains Momentum

Words by Mark Ringwood

Plans to erect a statue to commemorate the years spent in Emsworth by author and playwright PG Wodehouse received a boost when world-renowned sculptor Philip Jackson paid a visit to the town in early December. The working party, led by Lumley resident Richard Ommanney, showed Philip the proposed new location and with renewed enthusiasm the sculptor has returned to his West Sussex studio to create a drawing depicting PG Wodehouse resting on a large pile of the books he wrote – more than 90 in addition to 40 plays and musicals, and 200 short stories. For more than a decade Wodehouse lived in Emsworth and developed many of the favourite characters he is known for – Lord Emsworth and the Empress of Blandings being just two of them.

The proposed statue of PG Wodehouse would attract thousands of visitors to Emsworth

As an economic attraction for Emsworth the statue could be immense. There are members of the PG Wodehouse Society literally all over the world and notable fans of the writer include the Indian Ambassador to London and actors and broadcasters Stephen Fry, and Alexander Armstrong. Philip Jackson also enjoys a large and loyal worldwide following for the multi-million pound works he's created, which include Ghandi in Parliament Square; Bomber Command in Green Park; and Bobby Moore at Wembley Stadium. It is conservatively estimated that the statue could attract upwards of 25,000 visitors a year and contribute as much as £15m annually to the local economy. The intention is, that once full costs are known, the statue will be cast in bronze and be ready at some time in the future to commemorate either his birthday (15 October 1881), or his death (14 February 1975).

Further information is available from pgwodehousestatue@gmail.co.uk

Emsworth in Bloom

For more than 10 years Emsworth in Bloom has been bringing beautiful colour to the village. Sheila Morris, who was inspired by the floral displays in Chichester, decided that we could have the same. She's been the inspirational force behind EIB with a team of volunteers, 'The Green Finger Club', planting, weeding and watering - keeping all the planters wherever you go full of colour throughout the year. Although Sheila has been very ill recently, and has 'officially' retired, she still managed to make it to the coffee morning and raffle at the Pastoral Centre. The hamper, kindly donated by Havant Rotary Club, was won by Ray Herridge and raised £480.00 in funds towards next year's planting. If you fancy lending a hand or getting involved just ask anyone you see around Emsworth with a trowel in their hand. Please check out the web site www.emsworthinbloom.co.uk

Emsworth in Bloom Coffee Morning

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Funding for new projects in Emsworth

Words by Mike Bateman, ERF lead on Planning

Emsworth's a great place to live. But do you have ideas which could make it even better? If so, we're really keen to hear from you since we have some funds which are allocated to be spent in Emsworth on local infrastructure.

The source of these funds is the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which is collected from the developers of new properties and which is intended to relieve some of the pressures on local infrastructure brought about by new development. Emsworth has a complex but special place in this process in Havant since it has a Neighbourhood Plan.

The CIL money collected each year is divided between the Strategic and Neighbourhood allocations. Strategic funds go towards major borough-wide projects such as coastal defences. In the case of neighbourhood funds, government regulations state that those areas with a Neighbourhood Plan should be allocated 25% of the CIL collected in their area. In a protocol approved by the council in 2022, however, HBC chose not to do that but instead just 10% was ring-fenced for expenditure in Emsworth with the remaining 15% going into a borough-wide neighbourhood 'pot'.

So although the amount of money is perhaps more limited than it should be, we do have access to just over £40,000 to be spent on new or refurbished facilities anywhere in the town. In recent years, the fund has been growing slowly as annual allocations have been made to it, but on a scale which would make very little difference on a year to year basis. By carrying it forward annually, however, we have accumulated a larger sum which must be used to improve our local facilities.

We have £40,000 available to be spent on new or refurbished facilities in the town. Drop us a line with your ideas!

We're also anxious that as local government reorganisation approaches, the accumulated allocation reserved for Emsworth could disappear into the coffers of the new local government structure, losing its allocation to this community.

The protocol which covers CIL expenditure in Havant limits expenditure to local publicly owned assets, either to create new ones or repair those in need of maintenance. This is much more limiting than in the early years of CIL when money could be spent on privately owned assets in community use.

Our neighbourhood CIL has been used to top up the funding for projects such as the Spencers Field play park so it has certainly been useful to get projects done in the past few years but more could be done. That's where we want your ideas - not just for central Emsworth but for anywhere across the Emsworth community where you think that a small expenditure could make a difference.

So do let us have your ideas and we'll work with our local councillors and local government officers to see what can be delivered to the budget available, to make Emsworth an even better place! Just drop us an email with your ideas to: secretary.erf@gmail.com and we'll take it from there.

Emsworth Show at risk without new volunteers

Words by Christina Novis

As preparations conclude for another successful Emsworth Show, the Committee wishes to acknowledge the exceptional contributions of several longstanding members whose service has been central to the event's continued success.

Faith Ponsonby has been a key figure within the Committee for 25 years, serving both as Chair and, most recently, as Volunteers Manager. Her leadership and commitment have played a vital role in maintaining the high standards and strong community involvement that define the Emsworth Show.

Andy Cunningham has devoted 15 years to the Show, including almost seven years as Grounds Manager. His practical overseeing and dedication, have ensured the showgrounds have remained safe, well-organised, and welcoming for the thousands who attend each August Bank Holiday Monday. After ten years on the Committee — including four years as Chair — I will also be stepping down from the Chair position while continuing to support the Show in other capacities.

These significant departures mean that the Show now faces a critical shortage of committee members. As a result, the future of the Emsworth Show is at genuine risk without new volunteers stepping forward. The Committee is urgently seeking individuals to fill the roles of Chair, Volunteers Manager and Traffic Manager, as well as volunteers willing to contribute to the broader planning and organisation of the event.

Emsworth Show is a longstanding community tradition, organised by volunteers who meet monthly throughout the year to prepare this major annual event. Without new members to share the workload and bring fresh energy, it may not be possible for the Show to continue in future years.

Anyone interested in supporting one of Emsworth's most valued community events is warmly encouraged to get in touch. New volunteers will find the experience rewarding, meaningful, and essential to keeping this cherished tradition alive.

www.emshs.org.uk/ info@emshs.org.uk

RNLI

Vivien Alexander, RNLI Branch Fundraising Secretary, Emsworth and Havant

The annual Carol Singing took place on a beautiful winter's day on Saturday 20 December at 11 am. A large crowd attended in support of the RNLI and sang heartily, ably led by the excellent Village Voices Choir. We would like to thank Councillor Lulu Bowerman, organiser of the event and Vince Lavender, the Chairman of the Choir for their support. We would also like to thank Flintstones Tearooms who provided some delicious mulled wine and hot chocolate. RNLI 'Stormy Stan' also paid us a very welcome visit. This is the sixth year the event has taken place and it becomes even more popular. It raised a magnificent sum of £738.31 in support of the RNLI. Many thanks.

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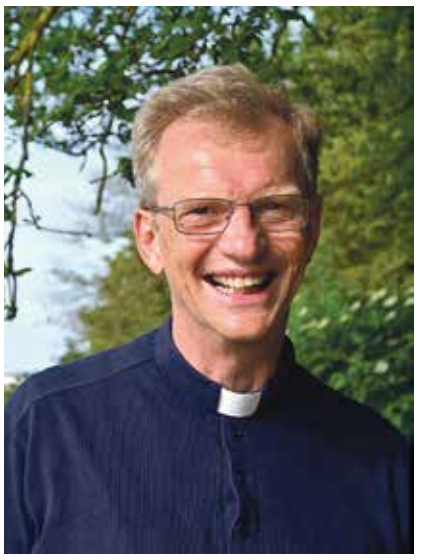
Community

News from the Parish of Warblington-with-Emsworth

A New Year's Welcome from the Rector

At the start of this New Year, I would like to extend a warm and heartfelt invitation to everyone in our community.


Reverend Canon Andrew Sheard

A new year is often a time of new beginnings – a moment to pause, reflect, and look ahead. Whatever this past year has held for you, the year ahead offers space to start afresh.

Our two churches – St James' in Emsworth and St Thomas à Becket in Warblington – are places where you can come just as you are. You don't need to have life perfectly sorted; church is a space for real people, living real lives. We gather not because we have all the answers, but because we believe that faith, hope, and community can sustain us through whatever lies ahead.

We try to offer a range of styles at our services, so that there may be something to suit everyone. Some prefer a more traditional style with familiar words, whilst for others informality and interaction is more helpful.

Whether you've been to church many times, haven't been in years, or have never been at all, you are warmly welcome.

With every blessing for the year ahead

Revd Canon Andrew Sheard

Here's an overview of our regular services at both churches

Sunday Services at St James'

- 8am Holy Communion: 1st, 3rd & 5th Sundays
- 10am Holy Communion: 1st, 3rd, 4th and 5th Sundays
- 10am Family Service: 2nd Sundays
- 10am Breakfast Church: 1st & 3rd Sundays – in the Parish Hall (informal)
- 4pm Wild Church: 4th Sundays, always outside, in the St. James' Church Garden
- 5pm All-in@5: 1st & 3rd Sundays – in the Parish Hall (informal)
- 6.30pm Holy Communion: 2nd Sundays

Sunday Services at St Thomas à Becket

- 8am Holy Communion: 2nd & 4th Sundays
- 11am every Sunday: Holy Communion or Matins
- 6.30pm Evensong: 3rd Sundays

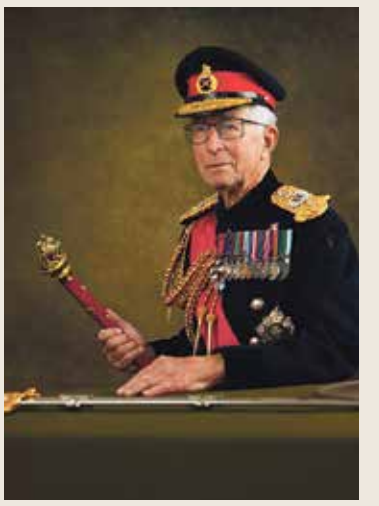
Don't worry if you're not sure which Sunday of the month it is – every Sunday there will always be a service at 10am at St James' and 11am at St Thomas à Becket

Website: https://www.warblingtonwithemsworth.org
Facebook: @WarblingtonwithEmsworth
Instagram: @Warblingtonwithemsworth

Emsworth Maritime and Historical Trust (Emsworth Museum)

The Lord Richards Lecture

Emsworth Maritime and Historical Trust's winter lectures series continues on Thursday, 5 February 2026 at 7:30 pm with the annual Lord Richards Lecture. In June 2025, he was promoted to Field Marshal and is pictured here with his Field Marshal's baton. For 2026, we have deliberately kept the lecture title the same as for 2025 – *Global Wars and Chaos*.


Lord Richards

So much has happened in the world militarily and politically in the last twelve months that we can expect the content to be rather different. This is an unparalleled opportunity to hear at first hand an informed commentary on events in a turbulent world – and to ask questions.

Because of the interest it generates, in 2026 the Lord Richards lecture will be held in the Baptist Church. Entrance will be by ticket only. Tickets are available from Bookends in Emsworth, payable in cash.

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Locals demand action to save river "on its knees"

Campaigners are calling on the national environment watchdog to take urgent action to save a local chalk stream and the wildlife that depends on it. In many places, the River Ems has run dry or been reduced to a trickle following the summer drought.

Populations of key species have crashed alarmingly. Campaigners say they want the Environment Agency (EA), set up to protect and improve the environment, to do its job. But it continues to allow Portsmouth Water to pump unsustainable amounts of water from the river's underground sources.

Local citizen scientists who monitor the river's wildlife say the agency has failed to respond to their findings. They are calling on the EA to investigate the dramatic drop in river wildlife and urgently cut the amount of water that Portsmouth Water is allowed to remove. The Ems runs from the South Downs into Chichester Harbour. It is fed by springs coming from the underground chalk bedrock, or aquifer, and flows from the South Downs through Westbourne, on the Hants/West Sussex border, before reaching the sea at Emsworth.

Chalk streams like the Ems are as internationally rare and ecologically important as coral reefs or rainforests. Rare species including water voles and eels have been recorded in the Ems, and local people have been used to seeing kingfishers, brown trout and many species of bat. The campaign group Friends of the Ems (FOTE) has been pushing for a reduction in the amount of water taken – or 'abstracted' – from the river's sources. The EA controls an abstraction licence, dating back to the 1960s, which allows Portsmouth Water to keep removing water from the underground aquifer. The amount removed has steadily increased.

FOTE founder-member John Barker, a freshwater ecologist, lives on a farm in Westbourne. The Ems runs through his land and he regularly samples the river for key species that indicate its health. Around the country, much of this work used to be done by the EA but is now picked up by local people, under a partly EA-sponsored scheme.

He says: "Because of the lack of flow in the river, its all-important gravel habitats are smothered with algae and silt. Populations of small creatures have been near-decimated. They are needed as food by fish."

Friends of the Ems is part of local eco-group Greening Westbourne. To join the Friends, people can email greeningwestbourne@hotmail.co.uk
To find out more, people can search Greening Westbourne Campaign to see the group's website, or find its page on Facebook.

The Ems is a chalk stream running from the South Downs into Chichester Harbour

Oysterboat Terror Completes Best Season Ever

Words by Chris Clode. Photo by Michael Cleary

Oysterboat Terror, the beautifully restored Emsworth Oyster smack, has just completed its best season ever since starting passenger operations almost twenty years ago. Nearly 350 passengers enjoyed trips around Chichester Harbour lasting around two and a half hours and taking in all the beautiful sights within the harbour, including seals, birds and the stunning scenery of the Natural Landscape.

Income from booking was nearly twice as much as any previous year and this was partly due to the decision of the Terror Operating Committee to run trips from the new Itchenor Jetty for two weeks during the summer to coincide with the Chichester Festivities.

Such was the success of this decision, which enabled two sailings a day from Itchenor when only one is possible from Emsworth due to tidal restrictions, that 2026 will also see Terror operating from Itchenor for a couple of weeks next summer. And 2026 heralds the twentieth year of operation of Terror which was rescued from almost certain abandonment and destruction by John Davis the then Chichester Harbourmaster. Originally built in Emsworth around 1895, she was awarded a Heritage Lottery Grant in 2004 and was fully restored back to sailing condition and launched with great ceremony during the Emsworth Food Festival in 2006.

Since then, thousands of passengers have enjoyed the delights of sailing and helming such an historic sailing vessel and after a full winter refit, Terror will be back on the water and taking passengers from May to October 2026. Booking for 2026 will be available early in the New Year at www.oysterboat-terror.org.uk . Alternatively, why not buy a Gift Card now as a Christmas Present for a trip next year for a friend or loved one – also available from our website.

Terror is owned by Chichester Harbour Conservancy and operated by a dedicated band of over 40 volunteers from Friends of Chichester Harbour. She operates from Emsworth Yacht Harbour from May to October, and once again will be sailing for two weeks from Itchenor Jetty during next summer. Trips cost £35 for adults, £20 for children and the whole boat can be chartered for £175.

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Environment

Return of the Native (Oyster): Using natural solutions to human problems

By Lottie Johns, Harbour Oysters

On a February morning, two sisters lower baskets into the water beneath the jetties at Emsworth Yacht Harbour. Inside those cages are thousands of native oysters, part of a bold, hands-on effort to improve water quality, restore biodiversity and help resurrect Chichester Harbour's marine ecosystems and heritage through their programme 'Harbour Oysters'.

A single adult oyster filters around 150 litres of water every day, removing pollutants and making the environment more habitable for other plants and animals.

It started in 2022 with an idea, followed up by years of trials, research and licensing hurdles. Fast forward to January 2026 and plans are full-steam ahead to install around 50,000 more oysters at several new sites throughout Chichester Harbour and along the south coast, and talks are underway for many more.

The Vision: Oyster-Powered Restoration

Utilising existing jetties to suspend the oysters in the water, the oyster installations tackle suspended and dissolved pollutants without disturbing the seabed. In the summer months they reproduce and their larva disperse and settle to restore the wild populations, seeding natural reefs throughout Chichester Harbour and beyond - supporting the seabed restoration works by the Harbour Conservancy, Blue Marine Foundation and others.

The first project at Emsworth Yacht Harbour is funded through Chichester Harbour Friends, with groups of local volunteers helping with various tasks along the way, including the biosecurity 'scrubbing' events, and regular inspections. These tell them how the oysters are getting on and reveal the wonderful mix of other marine plants and animals which gather on and around the cages.

A Heritage Nearly Lost

Oysters were a cornerstone of life in Emsworth; in 1760 a reported 24,000 oysters were dredged from Emsworth Harbour on one tide alone and England's largest ever sail powered fishing boat, the Echo 2, was built in - and operated from - Emsworth. Once a staple of food, trade and industry, oysters fed the Roman troops who landed here and millions more mouths over the centuries since. With the rise of the Industrial Revolution however, overfishing, habitat destruction, pollution and disease decimated native stocks. Across the UK and Europe, oyster populations have collapsed by an estimated 95% and native oyster reefs are now some of the most endangered habitats in Europe.

Our harbours, our future

Projects like Harbour Oysters also inspire local stewardship: they show that conservation doesn't always require large institutions; it often begins with a few passionate people willing to roll up their sleeves. In restoring a native species, Lottie and Poppy Johns – the sisters mentioned above - aren't just bringing back oysters, they are reweaving the web of life beneath our waters, reminding us that, even in our busiest harbours, nature can be a powerful tool, if given a chance.

Harbour Oysters does not operate in isolation; they have received great support from Chichester Harbour Conservancy and the Blue Marine Foundation. Both have provided practical and academic advice, as well as many others – including other harbour authorities - who have given their time and experience to help develop and deliver the project and the wider programme which has become Harbour Oysters. A recent partnership with Sussex Bay is helping expand their reach as well as continue to develop academic research into the positive impact that oysters can have on our coastal waters and communities. This January, with the cold water, they can once again start installing their precious ecosystem engineers at sites along the south coast, with the ultimate aim of addressing our wider water quality issues, one harbour at a time.

Get involved...
You can play a role. We will need volunteers to help with projects this winter. Watch out for how you can get involved via social media (search 'Harbour Oysters' on Instagram and Facebook) or via their website www.harbouroysters.com

10,000 Oysters Scrubbed by Volunteers as Part of Solent Restoration Project

Volunteers have scrubbed 10,000 native European flat oysters as part of the Final Straw Foundation's oyster restoration project. The oysters, sourced from Pembrokeshire, Wales, are being prepared for installation at sites across Portsmouth, Hayling Island, and Gosport where they will help restore local marine ecosystems.

The 24, 25 and 26 November 2025, saw more than 150 volunteers dedicate a combined effort of over 700 hours working at the University of Portsmouth's marine labs, which generously provided the facilities for the event. The project has been guided by the Blue Marine Foundation, ensuring that best practice conservation methods are followed at every stage.

European flat oysters have declined by 95% since the 1800s due to disease, overexploitation, habitat loss, and pollution. As 'ecosystem engineers,' these oysters are vital for improving water quality, stabilizing sediment, creating habitats for other species, and supporting overall biodiversity. Once installed, they will act as broodstock, releasing offspring to help repopulate the Solent.

Before they can be installed, oysters must be carefully cleaned to ensure they are biosecure and free from any contaminants that could harm delicate marine ecosystems. Volunteers scrub the oysters to remove worm casts, algae, and other debris, making sure the oysters are healthy and ready for their new home. Over the course of the project, a total of 10,000 oysters will be prepared and deployed.

The Final Straw Foundation extends heartfelt thanks to all volunteers, the University of Portsmouth, and the Blue Marine Foundation for their support.

www.finalstrawfoundation.org

Environment

"See it, say it, forget it"

Larger railway stations including Havant, Chichester and Emsworth have covered bike racks which are monitored by CCTV. The idea of cycling to the station and then travelling by train seems to be very environmentally friendly. However, British Transport Police have confirmed they won't review CCTV footage if a bike is stolen after being locked at a station for more than two hours. With more than 14,000 bikes reported stolen from outside train stations between 2021 and 2023, this policy has been heavily criticised for giving a green light to bike thieves and penalising lower-income groups. It has also been revealed that this policy has been in place since August 2024, at a time when bike thefts from stations have been increasing, with a 39 per cent reported increase in such crimes between 2022 and 2023. Cycling UK have stated: "That's effectively a green light to thieves, and a message to everyone else that cycle theft just isn't a priority."

https://www.cyclinguk.org/article/what-do-if-your-bike-gets-stolen

Community spirit shines at the fourth Emsworth Eco Fair

Words and photo by Caroline Fisk

The fourth Emsworth Eco Fair took place on Saturday 25 October 2025 bringing together local environmental groups, families and visitors for a morning of activities, stalls and refreshments across both Emsworth Sailing Club and Emsworth Slipper Sailing Club. The Eco Fair grew from an idea developed by Clare Mogridge whose wish was to create a community space that celebrates local environmental action. Her vision shaped the first fair and continues to guide its growth, "We wanted to provide a space where our local environmental heroes could come together and showcase the fabulous work that they do raising awareness and enabling others to get involved."

This year's fair saw record participation, with 18 stalls including Chichester Harbour Conservancy, Bird Aware Solent, Harbour Oysters and the Final Straw Foundation.

For more information about the Emsworth Eco Fair, contact Clare Mogridge via Emsworth Sailing Club membership@emsworthsc.org.uk

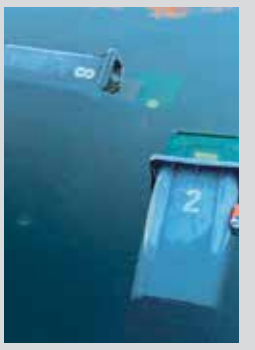
EHS News

Emsworth Horticultural Society unveiled their new sign at the last opening of the Distribution Hut for 2025. The festively dressed committee served hot drinks and mince pies to members who came to renew their membership. The tiles depicted around the sign, were made by people who visited the Felix Tabitha stall at a day of workshops organised by the EHS, just one of the events organised to promote all aspects of gardening. Joining the society, you become part of a community with gardening as the common theme. Our aim is to encourage people new to gardening, not just experienced gardeners.

During 2025 our 500 members enjoyed seven trips and were informed and entertained by six speakers. Five of our members opened their gardens for members to view. Along with the Emsworth Show Plant Sale, Quiz Night, Xmas Dinner, Annual Summer Party and the Volunteers Thankyou Party, our members have enjoyed a packed year of events. The committee are busy planning talks and trips for 2026. The trips already arranged are a visit to Highclere Castle and Gardens and the BBC Gardeners' World Spring Fair at Beaulieu.

Vandalism at Bridgefoot Pond

Residents of Bridgefoot Path are having issues with children depositing Wheelie Bins into the Mill Pond. This is happening every week. Some local residents have been able to recover the bins from the pond.



Our first talk on 22 January will be given by Peter Gregory who is an RHS Board Member. With his extensive knowledge he will be talking on Behind the Scenes at Chelsea. For all of those who have visited, or are planning to visit, this world-famous flower show, this is a talk you don't want to miss.

All our talks are held at Emsworth Community Centre. Doors open for refreshments at 7.10pm; talks start at 7.30pm. We welcome visitors who are charged £5.00. If you have a garden, whatever the size, and want to learn more about being a member of the EHS, please visit our website: www.emshs.org.uk

Emsworth Show

Don't forget to put in your diaries, phones, calendars, etc that the 2026 Emsworth Show will be held on Bank Holiday Monday, 31 August 2026 at One Church, Thorney Road, Emsworth.

Further extension to Centurion Way

Walkers and energetic cyclists will be pleased to know that South Downs National Park have created a permissive footpath which joins the existing Centurion Way (Chichester to West Dean) to the new section at Singleton. There is no need now to travel along the A286 to re-join the Centurion Way. The new path starts by the old tunnel, goes up a steep bank, then up some very steep wooden steps and on through the woods where it comes out on the new track that leads to Singleton Station. Eventually the Centurion Way will enable walkers and cyclists to travel all the way from Chichester to Cocking where it will join the South Downs Way.

Work continues on King Charles III coastal path

Contractors have been working on completing the Emsworth sections of this round England coastal path. The photo shows the causeway which takes the path from the shore into Nore Barn Woods.

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Environment

Ems Valley Memorial Arboretum EVMA

Letter from the Chair, Eva Mikuska

We had a very busy and productive year in 2025, marked by both challenges and significant progress. Among our most important achievements was the successful planting of trees, with minimal losses despite the prolonged period of dry weather experienced over the summer months. This outcome reflects the careful planning, commitment, and efforts of everyone involved.

Another major milestone was the registration of the Trust as a charity in August (Charity No. 1214183). In addition, we installed the plaque stand for those we wish to remember, which was formally unveiled on 27 September. This has created a meaningful and respectful focal point within the Arboretum. We are also pleased to confirm that all three In Memoriam binders are now in place at Emsworth Library, Westbourne Parish Church, and Emsworth Museum.

Since our last update, we have reached several milestones. The Ramblers visited to mark the installation of the bench they kindly sponsored. This was a very positive and well-attended occasion, providing an opportunity to walk together, meet members of the local community, and celebrate a bench that is already well used and clearly appreciated.

Events such as this highlight the growing connection between the Arboretum and the wider community, and the value of partnerships built on shared interests and support.

The final tree planting of the year took place on 1 November. In the days leading up to the event, the forecast suggested wet and challenging conditions; however, on the day itself the dark clouds moved eastwards, and those involved were fortunate to enjoy sunshine. Ten trees were planted as replacements for those that had succumbed to the summer drought. This year, we selected a slightly earlier planting date, which proved beneficial; the ground had been softened by autumn rain without becoming waterlogged, and the soil was still warm. These conditions gave the newly planted trees an excellent opportunity to establish their roots before winter. By midday, all the trees had been planted, staked, and fitted with protective cages to safeguard them against possible deer damage.

This year the Trustees will continue to focus on consolidating the progress made so far and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the Arboretum. Priorities will include ongoing maintenance and monitoring of the newly planted trees, further development of community engagement activities, and strengthening governance arrangements now that the

The Ramblers visited to mark the installation of the bench they kindly sponsored.

Trust is operating as a registered charity. We will also continue to explore opportunities for partnerships, sponsorship, and volunteering, all of which play a vital role in supporting the Arboretum's growth and accessibility.

There is also an interactive map (which will be updated with the latest planting) where one can identify all the trees so far planted https://evma.org.uk/the-trees/tree-locator. Anyone interested in work parties should register with Friends of Hampshire Farm Meadows (Neil Mant hfmfriends@gmail.com).

On behalf of all the trustees, Eva, Lulu, Matt, Frank, Nigel, Guy, Yvonne, Kate, and Caroline, we wish you a very happy New Year.

info@evma.org.uk

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Petersfield Climate Action Network (PeCAN)

Are you wondering how you might be able to stay warm at home - and save money - this winter? Hampshire homeowners can now access tailored, free and impartial advice to help you make more informed decisions about home energy upgrades, thanks to the My Home Made Better energy advice service.

The experienced advice team at Petersfield Climate Action Network (PeCAN) are working alongside energy advisers at the Environment Centre (tEC) to deliver the service, helping residents across South East Hampshire.

Advisers could help you understand why your home might be losing heat in winter, what is causing high energy bills, and whether there might be opportunities to make the most of grant funding, earn money back from the grid, or increase your property's overall value. With 37% more renewable installations in the first half of 2025 (vs 2024) now is the time to find out what you could do with your home.

The My Home Made Better service recognises that widely available, generic information on heat pumps, insulation and solar panels is not enough, and that you need relatable guidance unique to your home. Advisers understand the demand for access to reliable, trustworthy advice, without feeling under pressure to commit to work you're not comfortable with. Recipients have told PeCAN that the advice offered is 'clear and extremely helpful'.

Advisers could help you understand why your home might be losing heat in winter, what is causing high energy bills

PeCAN is an environmental charity aiming to help local communities reduce their carbon emissions, protect nature, improve resilience, and adapt to the changing climate. Their projects include the immensely popular A Fruit Tree in Every Garden scheme, which has seen over 3,000 subsidised fruit trees distributed across East Hampshire over the past five years. Their biennial Petersfield Eco Fair welcomed more than 1,500 visitors in 2024, and is set to return in July 2026. Their education outreach programme, working with local primary and secondary schools, has seen more than 100 free workshops and assemblies delivered to over 5,000 students.

If you'd like to start exploring options for your home, email mhmb@petersfieldcan.org, fill in the contact form on PeCAN's website: petersfieldcan.org/projects/home-energy/my-home-made-better or call the Environment Centre on free phone line 0800 804 8601.

For more information, inspiration, case studies, and videos from around the region, head to www.myhomemadebetter.org.

my home made better

My Home Made Better has received funding from the Energy Industry Voluntary Redress Scheme. It is supported by Hampshire County Council, Southampton City Council, and Portsmouth City Council, and delivered by the Environment Centre, in partnership with Petersfield Climate Action Network, Winchester Action on the Climate Crisis and Energy Alton.

Find out more about PeCAN: https://petersfieldcan.org

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/PetersfieldClimateActionNetwork

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/petersfield_can/

The Environment Centre: https://environmentcentre.com

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Business News

Emsworth Loves Local

During 2025 our community came together to raise a total of £1300 for the Final Straw Foundation, an Emsworth based charity dedicated to reducing plastic pollution and promoting sustainable practices. Emsworth Loves Local Small Business Markets, a community-driven initiative that connects local artisans with consumers, hosted a series of events and activities throughout the year aimed at raising awareness about the environmental challenges we face, particularly the growing issue of plastic waste. The generous £1300 donation gathered during these events will go directly towards the Final Straw Foundation's vital projects, including beach cleanups, educational outreach programmes, and advocacy for reducing single-use plastics.

Barbara Carthew and Charlotte Markham at Emsworth Loves Local said:

"We're incredibly proud of our community of traders for coming together to support this important cause. Every pound raised will help protect our planet for future generations. The funds raised will have a meaningful impact on the Final Straw Foundation's mission, and we are so grateful for the support of the local community and small businesses who made this possible. We hope this donation will inspire others to join us in making a difference."

Bianca Carr - CEO of Final Straw Foundation - recently said when she heard about how much we had raised:

"The generosity shown by Emsworth Loves Local Small Business Markets will make a real difference in the fight against plastic pollution. This donation will help us continue our work to reduce plastic waste and raise awareness in the community."

We also invite anyone interested in supporting the Final Straw Foundation or learning more about our ongoing market events to visit www.emsworthloveslocal.uk and www.finalstrawfoundation.org

Another estate agent for Emsworth

Nexa Properties, who have offices in Portsmouth and Chichester, are the new tenants of 7 High St, Emsworth. The shop was previously occupied by PO10 gift shop which closed in June after trading for seven years. Nexa will be the ninth agent in the town joining: Borland & Borland (2 branches), Cubbitt & West, Gascoigne-Pees, Treagust, Fine & Country, Henry Adams and Leaders.

Vacant business premises

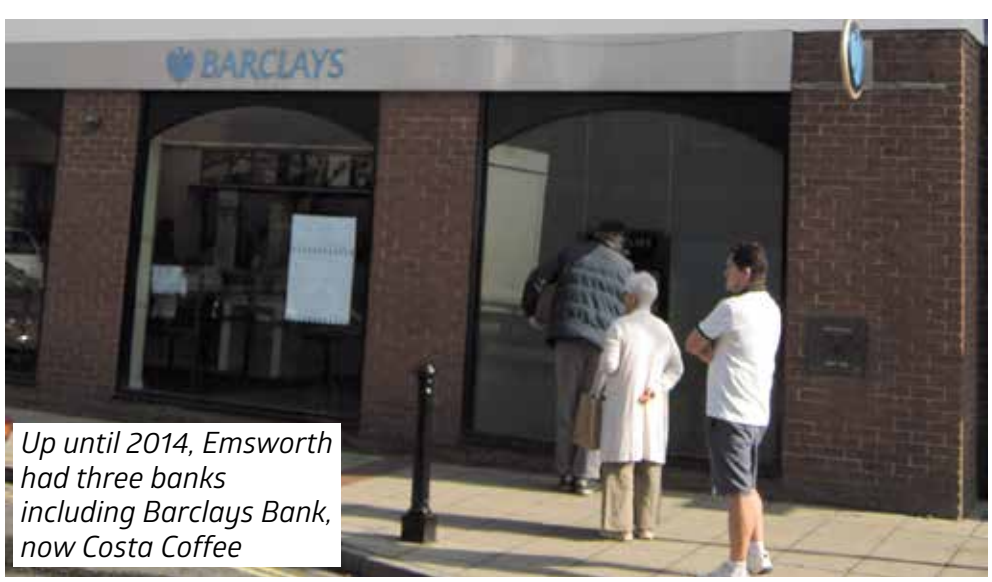
- 57 High St (Old Pharmacy) which closed in April 2025 is not currently being marketed
- 6 Queen St (formerly Vin Wine Merchants) is now listed as under offer by Borland & Borland. The 2 bedroom, 634 sq ft house was being marketed for residential use.
- Co-Working, 23 High St, Emsworth are offering desk space and small one-person offices from £300 per month. https://cow-orking-emsworth.co.uk

Banks to close

Lloyds Banking Group (Lloyds, Halifax, Bank of Scotland, Scottish Widows) have announced that Lloyds Bank, Havant will close on 19 January 2026 and Halifax, Havant will close on 15 January 2026. Up until 2014 Emsworth had three banks: Lloyds (closed 2014, now Emsworth Dental Surgery), Barclays (closed 2014, now Costa) and Nat West (closed 2017, now PJW). One of the reasons given for closing banks was that customers could access services at nearby branches. However, banks continue to close branches across the country.

Here are the nearest branches of the main banks:

- HSBC – Chichester (self-service only, no counter service); Waterlooville (self-service only, no counter service); Portsmouth (counter service)
- Lloyds/BOS – Havant (closing on 19 Jan); Waterlooville; Chichester; Cosham, Portsmouth
- Barclays – Waterlooville (Community Centre Tues –Thurs); Chichester; Portsmouth; Havant Library (Tues & Thurs PM only)
- Nat West/RBS – Emsworth (mobile service at Spice Village car park, High St, every Tuesday 1235 -1405); Chichester; Portsmouth
- Coop Bank – Southampton
- Halifax – Havant (closing 15 Jan); Waterlooville; Chichester
- Santander – Waterlooville; Chichester; Portsmouth
- TSB – Chichester; Portsmouth
- Virgin Money/Clydesdale/Yorkshire – No branches in South of England
- Nationwide – Havant; Waterlooville; Cosham; Chichester; Portsmouth
- Metro - Southampton



Up until 2014, Emsworth had three banks including Barclays Bank, now Costa Coffee

Emsworth Gym

A new business, Emsworth Gym has opened at 2 Havant Road, Emsworth in premises formally known as Fiscal House. The business is run by Emsworth entrepreneur Peter Terry who also runs Emsworth Heating.

He bought the premises in 2024, primarily to use the yard for his heating business. He recognised a gap in the market locally and converted the 320 sq m building into a well-equipped gym. The gym has no staff with members accessing the building using an app on their phone. It can accommodate up to 25 people at a time and has over 85 members.

Changing rooms and showers have now been installed. The building had been empty for some time and there had been several planning applications relating to converting it to housing. The gym is open from 5 am – 10 pm, Monday to Sunday. Membership, which offers unlimited use of the gym, is from £30 - £40 a month. https://emsworthgym.co.uk/

New Local Businesses
Editor: If you have started a new business then please send a brief article and photo to The Ems. There is no charge for this service.

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Business News

Local artist popped up for Christmas and is looking for premises

Talented print-maker and wood engraver Wendy Middleditch was able to exhibit some of her works in a pop-up gallery at 6 Queen St over Christmas. This empty unit had been used by Vin wine merchants and is now listed as under offer. Wendy also exhibits at Artisan Gallery, 58 North St, Chichester. Wendy would like to have her own gallery/shop in the area. Her work can be viewed on instgram @sewprinty . She also sells artists supplies: www.instagram.com/easel_art_supplies_ltd/#

Local Event Professional Celebrates Award-Winning Year

An Emsworth-based event professional closed out 2025 on a high after receiving national recognition for her work in the events industry. Kelly Taws, who runs Athena Event Solutions from her home in Emsworth, was recognised at the Visionary Leadership Awards, receiving two honours: Event Management Visionary of the Year and Client Satisfaction Excellence Award. The awards celebrate outstanding leadership and service across a range of professional industries.

The recognition continued at the Southern Enterprise Awards, where Athena Event Solutions was named Most Client-Focused Event Management Company 2025 – Hampshire, highlighting the business's reputation for its calm, client-led approach to event delivery. With more than 25 years' experience in the events industry, Kelly specialises in the operational delivery of conferences, corporate events and exhibitions. While her work takes her across the globe, Athena Event Solutions remains firmly rooted in Emsworth. www.athenaeventsolutions.com/

A D Williams in liquidation

The vehicle repairers A D Williams who had 11 branches across the south of England went into liquidation last year. The Palmers Road, Emsworth branch is now run by Accident Repair Hub, a Dorking based company.

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Local pubs recognised by Good Beer Guide

The Blue Bell and the Coal Exchange (both in South St) and The Cricketers, Commonside, Westbourne are listed in the Good Beer Guide 2026. This publication gives details of pubs who serve cask (real) ale to a high standard.

Care home sold as owner retires

The Oaks Care Home, 46 New Brighton Road, Emsworth is registered for 33 service users and has 30 en-suite bedrooms. The business was owned by Dr Ian Caldwell. The Oaks has been sold to Stephen Clarke who owns Ferndale Care Home in Stein Road, Southbourne.

Local MP Alan Mak visits Le Petit Pain for Small Business Saturday and urges people to support independent traders

He called in to see owner Russ Bond to show his support and back the annual campaign that encourages people to use small businesses in their communities all year round. Small Business Saturday takes place on the first Saturday in December each year, but the campaign aims to have a lasting impact on shopping habits. The theme this year is 'celebrating the nation's favourite businesses'.

Le Petit Pain has been a part of the Emsworth lunchtime landscape for around 30 years. It was originally a bakery before becoming a sandwich bar. Russ's father Malcolm took over the business in 2015 and today it offers a range of made-to-order filled baguettes, rolls and sandwiches. Le Petit Pain has a wide variety of hot freshly-cooked options for breakfast or brunch, plus traditional cold lunchtime fillings and a selection of pies, pasties and sausage rolls.

Farmers' Market

The market is held on the third Saturday of each month from 9 am to 1 pm in the Square. The dates for the next few months are: 17 Jan , 21 Feb, 21 Mar, 18 Apr.

Local restaurant is one of the best in Hampshire

South St restaurant, 36 On The Quay has been awarded 3 AA rosettes. Only three other restaurants in Hampshire received this accolade. 36 On The Quay is also one of only 10 Hampshire restaurants recommended in the Michelin guide.

Facts and figures

Legal minimum wage for over-21s to rise 4.1% in April 2026, from £12.21 to £12.71 per hour, with the wage for 18 to 20-year-olds rising from £10 to £10.85.

Unemployment figures

Borough of Havant 2,590 (3.6%)
Emsworth 120 (2.3%)
Chichester DC area 2,355 (3.2%)
UK 1,667,655 (3.9%)

Inflation rate

The official consumer price inflation rate as calculated by ONS is 3.2%
In Feb 2021 it stood at 0.4%. www.ons.gov.uk

Rail Journeys

The Office of Rail and Road have published rail travel data for the period April 2024 – March 2025. The top 10 stations in the UK are all in London. Liverpool St is the busiest in the UK with 98 million passenger arrivals and departures. Train fare revenue for Great Britain's rail network rose 8% to £11.5 billion between April 2024 and March 2025, contributing to a reduction in government funding which fell to £11.9 billion. However, whilst the number of passenger journeys is approaching pre-pandemic levels at 1.7 billion, fare revenue continues to lag 12% behind where it was before the pandemic. www.orr.gov.uk/

Here are the figures for our local stations:

STATION	No of passengers & departures 2024 -25	Most popular destination
Havant	2,082,866	London Waterloo
Emsworth	362,368	Chichester
Chichester	2,687,308	London Victoria
Southbourne	229,080	Chichester
Warblington	34,634	Chichester

Arts & Entertainment

By Russell Bramley, Arts Correspondent
Email: russatemsart@gmail.com

Chichester Cathedral 2026 - Festival of Flowers

This notice is made early to avoid disappointment. The Festival of Flowers is a 4 day spectacular in the setting of Chichester's 950 year old Cathedral. This is an art form that may not always grab the showbiz headlines but is more than equally spectacular and so skilful. First shown in 1996 this is the 30th anniversary of a festival that has more than 100 volunteers arranging more than 50,000 blooms that will transform the cathedral in a spectacular display being held from Wednesday 3 June to Saturday 6 June 2026. I, for one, will take the chance to experience this breath-taking celebration of nature and artistry that will transform the Cathedral with colour, scent and beauty.

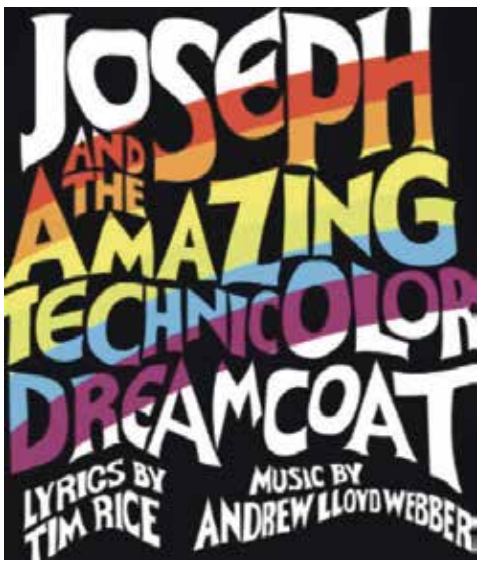
www.chichestercathedral.org.uk/news/tickets-chichester-cathedrals-2026-festival-flowers-now-sale or call 0333 666 3366

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat – St John's Church

Supporting a good cause – get behind them and raise the roof

On Sunday 25 January 6 pm – 7 pm the children and youth of St John's Church, Southbourne are looking to raise funds for the church roof repairs with a production of this fabulous Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber musical. I'm not sure how many times I've seen this but each time it has left me smiling and foot tapping. With tickets at £2 (yes £2) how can we not look to support this. With refreshments and a raffle to help boost funds, empty that old loose change bottle and coins found down the side of the sofa and help these youngsters.

St John's Church, Main Road, Southbourne PO10 8LB Tel: 01243 375576.



Havant Symphony Orchestra - *Echoes of the Isles*

Join HSO and talented conductors James Thomas and Ben Qureshi for *Echoes of the Isles* - a vivid journey through music that resonates with the spirit and soul of the Isles and reflects a celebration of the rich musical traditions and folklore of the British Isles. The concert will open with Malcolm Arnold's lively foot-tapping *Four Scottish Dances*, followed by Bruch's *Scottish Fantasy*, featuring outstanding soloist Alexandra Peel (violin). From the sweeping landscapes of Wales comes Edward German's *Welsh Rhapsody* and then onto the irresistible rhythms of Ireland's *Lord of the Dance*. The programme closes with George Butterworth's poignant *The Banks of Green Willow* which offers a timeless pastoral vision, evoking the lyrical heart of the English countryside.

Tickets are £16, Early Bird (available until 3 weeks before the concert).
£18 Standard; £20, On the Door (not available online); £5, Student/Under 18.
Saturday 28 February 2026, 7.30 pm – 9.30 pm at Warblington School Concert Hall Southleigh Road, Havant PO9 2RR

https://havantorchestras.org/

Station Theatre, Hayling Island – *Sleeping Beauty*

As it's 'that time of year', try and get down and support Hayling Island 'HIADS' production of *Sleeping Beauty*. I've seen a couple of their recent shows and their enthusiasm and commitment to entertain deserves our local support. Step into a world of enchantment, laughter, and timeless storytelling with *Sleeping Beauty*. Packed with all the magic, music, and mischievous fun you could wish for, this dazzling production brings the classic fairy tale to life like never before.
Fri 16 Jan to Sat 24 Jan. Fridays 7:30 pm, Saturdays 11 am and 3 pm, Sunday 18 Jan - relaxed and BSL interpreter performance at 11 am.

www.stationtheatre.co.uk/whatson.php

Chichester Festival Theatre

Death on the Nile
Tue 27 – Sat 31 Jan 2026
On board a luxurious cruise under the heat of the Egyptian sun, a couple's idyllic honeymoon is cut short by a brutal murder. As secrets that have been buried in the sands of time finally resurface, can the world-famous detective, Hercule Poirot, untangle the web of lies and solve another crime?

I saw the previous Agatha Christie offering here, the hugely successful *Murder on the Orient Express*, and the staging and production was as brilliant as the cast. This new production reunites writer Ken Ludwig and celebrated director Lucy Bailey (*The Other Boleyn Girl*, CFT; *Witness for the Prosecution*). Good seats are still available and can be found for a show that has been described as 'A lush, satisfying night out for die-hard fans of a proper whodunnit.'

All information can be found at www.cft.org.uk

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By Russell Bramley, Arts Correspondent
Email: russatemsart@gmail.com

Arts & Entertainment

Wemsfest

Feast of Fiddles

Feast of Fiddles

I used to be fairly middle of the road with almost cemented tastes, never really looking left or right, but since I have been searching out acts, artists and events I can't believe the variety I have been to, seen and thus far I've loved them all. With this in mind I followed my own lead to Westbourne and a Wemsfest evening with Ashley Campbell, daughter of the late great Glen. What a star performer she was and her band were brilliant. So, on the subject of Wemsfest, they are glad to welcome back Feast of Fiddles for the band's 31st spring tour. Among countless top reviews is this one: "Britain's fiddling supergroup" (Mark Radcliffe, BBC Radio 2)

Born in Nettlebed on Valentine's Day 1994 as a one-off special concert, Feast of Fiddles has done 30 spring tours, nearly as many festivals, and has 7 CDs to its name. Not bad for a bunch of old folk-rockers. I am looking forward to it already.

Feast of Fiddles will play The Pallant Centre, Havant, PO9 1BE on Friday 27 February. Doors open 7 pm for 7.30 pm show. Unreserved seating

Tickets on sale now at Bookends and Harbour Records, Emsworth, The Westbourne Café, Westbourne and www.WeGotTickets.com/WemsFest

4th Emsworth 'January Blues' Festival – in association with Harbour Records

• Lucca Mae & her band – with support from Michael & Sadie Roach
16 January, 2026 @ 7:30 pm - 10:30 pm
St James' Church Parish Hall, Emsworth, 20 Church Path, Emsworth,
• The Errol Linton Band
17 January, 2026 @ 7:30 pm - 10:30 pm
St James' Church Parish Hall, 20 Church Path, Emsworth

Other Wemsfest events

•Rum Ragged. 24 January 2026 @ 7:30 pm - 10:30 pm
The Old Malthouse - AKA Chidham Village Hall, Main Road (A259)
Chidham
• The East Pointers (with local support)
26 January 2026 @ 6:30 pm - 11:00 pm
Room 12, 20-23 Southgate, Chichester
• Gigspanner Big Band
15 April 2026 @ 7:30 pm - 10:30 pm
St James' Church, Emsworth, 20 Church Path, Emsworth
• The Tannahill Weavers
May 10, 2026 @ 7:30 pm - 10:30 pm
The Old Orchard - AKA Southbourne Village Hall, First Avenue,
Southbourne

www.wemsfest.com/events

The Spring Havant – a venue for all seasons

Living Spit: *Beauty and Beast*

Having taken my own advice in November I went to see this duo perform *Too many Greek Myths* at The Spring. My mild concern at having a very limited knowledge of Greek mythology was immediately dispelled by this duo that are without doubt the funniest act I have seen in years; with perfect comedy timing from start to finish it was absolutely hilarious. On the back of this I implore you to see how they handle the classic fairy tale. Whatever they turn their hands to invokes the same review that is quite simply: "Rollicking good fun – deserves a standing ovation every night."
21 Jan 7.30 pm; tickets: £17

Mrs Warren's Profession – NT Live

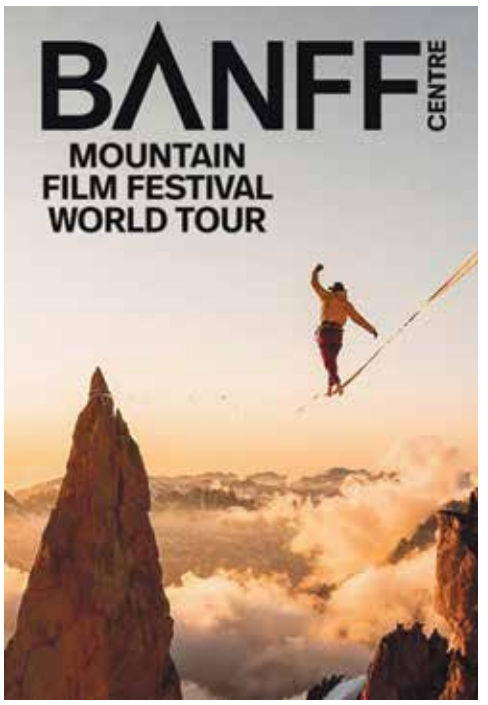
Imelda Staunton, five-time Olivier Award winner, was mesmerising in *Sweeney Todd* and *Gypsy* at Chichester festival and *Hello Dolly* in London. If you've ever seen her you know she is a breath-taking, once in a generation talent. The National Theatre Live screening of *Mrs Warren's Profession* has her cast opposite her real life daughter Bessie Carter for the very first time, playing mother and daughter in Bernard Shaw's 'incendiary moral classic.'
15 January 2026, 1.30 pm & 7.30 pm Tickets: £15 / £10 Under 25's
www.thespring.co.uk

Kings Theatre Southsea

Banff Mountain Film Festival

Friday 13 February 2026 7:30 pm
When I was a child I used to get excited, scared and laugh uncontrollably when running down a hill until you got to that adrenaline moment when it would end well or you'd crash land. To this day I am unstoppable when teased with the scariest roller coasters, so this this Kings Theatre advertisement fully caught my attention: 'Experience an unforgettable evening of thrilling adventure – up on the big screen! The Film Festival features a brand-new collection of short films filled with extreme journeys, untamed characters and captivating cinematography! Join the world's top adventure filmmakers and thrill-seekers as they climb, ski, paddle and ride into the wildest corners of the planet!'
I've not been to a screening here but will this time, riding every rapid and laughing at the edge of seat thrills.

For ticket info see –
www.kingsportsmouth.co.uk



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Youth & Schools

Youth Activities 2025

Words by Ellie Turnbull, ERF Committee lead for Youth

The ERF has worked with partner organisations to put on some activities for young people aged 11 – 16 during 2025. The ERF has run activity days in the Community Centre during half term weeks. They have been well attended and activities have included Nerf Wars, Table Tennis, Unihoc, Dodgeball, Dance and craft activities. The pizza lunches are very popular and are a great opportunity to chill and chat with old and new friends. These days could not be run without the support of our many volunteers and we are grateful to them. Also a big thank you goes to Emsworth Community Centre who give us the venue free.

During the summer holidays we moved into the recreation ground to provide sporting activities in partnership with Horizon Leisure. We held an event on four Wednesdays in August and there were only 15 minutes of rain which felt like a miracle. The young people were able to try out non-contact boxing, pickleball, tennis etc. The events were sponsored by The Friends of Emsworth Community Health who gave a grant which enabled us to have experienced coaches from Horizon. Feedback from the young people was very positive and they said they hope to have them again in 2026.

The next Young People Day will be during Half Term on Wednesday 18 February; 10.00 am to 2.00 pm in the Community Centre.

Working with Bourne Quilters we have held 6 sessions for our young quilters. These are very popular with between 10 and 15 turning up each time. Again, these could not run without the support of volunteers who are all experienced quilters as each young person needs one to one support. The latest day was to make Christmas stockings and gift tag gnomes. It was such a fun afternoon and they all went home happy and proud of what they had achieved as you can see from the photo.

We are busy planning 2026 with more activity days in the Community Centre and hopefully some more in the recreation ground. Young Quilter sessions are booked and they will be exhibiting in the quilt show in the summer. Planning is coming along to hold some cookery classes in the Community Centre kitchen. We are also planning to hold a 'come and help us plan' event in February with young people as it is important that they tell us what they want.

The next Young People Day will be during Half Term on Wednesday 18 February; 10.00 am to 2.00 pm in the Community Centre. If anyone wants more information on events contact youth.erf@gmail.com. Also contact us on this email if you are interested in becoming involved in working with young people.

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Southbourne Junior School Celebrating Every Day as an Outdoor Classroom

On the last day of school before the October half term, the pupils of Southbourne Juniors spent the day learning outside, as they celebrated World Outdoor Classroom Day, proving that some of the most powerful lessons happen under open skies. Every corner of the school grounds was alive with learning, the youngest explorers working with the oldest children to create works of art from fallen leaves, pupils getting to grips with Nordic knitting, wood work and the whole school (adults included) working on toasting the perfect melt in the middle marshmallows.

As well as a large field, the outdoor classroom at Southbourne Juniors includes a meadow, pond area and impressive tipi where children learn to take risks, develop resilience and an appreciation of how time spent outdoors nurtures both body and mind. World Outdoor Classroom Day may come once a year, but for Southbourne Junior School, outdoor learning isn't just reserved for special occasions, it's a celebration of the school ethos; that learning doesn't have to be confined to walls, it thrives in fresh air and muddy welly boots.

Lift Off

Words by Martin Helyer and Steve Williams

The site has been a hive of activity as builders brought the project to completion. It has been inspiring to watch the finishes and colour schemes take shape, creating calm and welcoming learning environments for both students and teachers. At the heart of the development, the scale of the new learning courtyard - anchored by a Juneberry tree [Amelanchier] - provides a peaceful focal point for the building.

Meanwhile, the Listed North Street House is benefitting from the environmental measures introduced. With the heating set low, the building remains comfortably warm, and the discreet secondary glazing has significantly reduced traffic noise, enhancing the sense of tranquillity inside. The builders' final touches between Christmas and New Year, ensured everything is ready for the planned handover.

The schools take occupation in early January, as anticipated. It has been a demanding year for all involved, but immensely rewarding to see this historic site brought back to life—ready to serve local children and, we hope, the wider community for years to come. Meanwhile on the education front, Lift Off Emsworth had an exciting and energetic autumn term as recruitment gathered pace and plans took shape for the centre's January opening. We are delighted to announce the appointment of a Centre Leader and two new teaching assistants, forming a vibrant team ready to bring the vision of Lift Off Emsworth to life.

With the team in place, curriculum development is well underway. Staff have mapped out an inspiring and supportive learning programme, and work continues as we source the materials and resources needed to deliver a dynamic experience for our students. At the same time, senior leaders from Bishop Luffa School and Park Community School have been collaborating closely to develop a shared handbook. This document will reflect the unified vision and values of both schools, ensuring that Lift Off Emsworth launches with strong, cohesive foundations.

Before Christmas, the team worked with the students who will form the first cohort, helping them prepare for this exciting new opportunity and supporting them as they take the next step in their educational journey. For many, this bespoke and nurturing environment has the potential to be truly life changing. Lift Off Emsworth opens its doors and begins in earnest on 19 January.

The Telegraph Primary School League Tables

In the Autumn 2025 edition of The Ems we published the positions of local secondary schools as listed in The Telegraph Secondary School League tables.

In these new tables primary schools are ranked according to nine separate criteria which add up to a maximum score of 40. These are designed to highlight a range of key data points, measuring key academic, behavioural and organisational performance.

Performance ratings: the ratings of 'Very good', 'Good', 'Fair', 'Below average' and 'Well below average' are derived from how a school compares to the average across the country. The weightings we use tend to push schools to 'Fair' or above, with 70% of schools fitting within these boundaries.

Here are the listings compiled by The Telegraph for our local primary schools:

SCHOOL	SCORE	OVERALL GRADE
St James'	23/40	Below average
Emsworth Primary	20/40	Well below average
Westbourne	29/40	Fair
Thorney	32/40	Good
Southbourne	21/40	Below average

www.telegraph.co.uk/education-and-careers/uk-primary-school-rankings-reading-writing/

(Editor: St James', Emsworth Primary, Southbourne and Thorney all received Good Ofsted reports when they were inspected in 2023)

Head Teacher to retire

Jill Pearce-Haydon has announced her intention to retire from St James' C of E Primary School at the end of the school year. The recruitment process has begun and a new head should be in place by September 2026.

Wanted: Education Correspondent

If you would like to write education related articles for The Ems please contact the Editor. Email: editor.theems@outlook.com

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Lindsay's Nature Notes

2025 Highlights

Words and photographs by Lindsay Jerome

I hope you all had a good 2025 and have some nature memories from it (rather than world politics!). I certainly have although one memory was very traumatic. It is of a female Sparrowhawk preying on House Sparrows in my back garden, even picking one off the seed feeder while it was feeding. A male Sparrowhawk then joined in and, between them, they have taken just about all the House Sparrows bred in my garden - from eleven down to just two and now only one comes in my garden. I have two bird brick houses front and back of my home each producing nine chicks each year. So, here's hoping they repopulate the back garden and can escape being caught by Sparrowhawks in the future.

Now, for my special Nature memories. Having lost one Hedgehog which used to visit our garden, I saw a sweet medium-sized one there the other day and I have a hedgehog house at the bottom of the garden I think it is using. Fingers crossed for this one!

I couldn't believe my eyes when a Firecrest was perched on my Spruce hedge and then flew onto my Hibiscus hedge where all sorts of Tits had been feeding. Long Tailed Tits, Blue Tits, Great Tits and Coal Tits come often to feed on insects or Hibiscus seeds depending on the time of year. Such a delight to watch them.

This Firecrest was, I thought, a first until I looked at my Facebook Memories and saw my post from 2 years ago saying one had visited. I love the way I can compare years of posting nature photos and comments there. It is my way of keeping a diary with the added value of my photos. I have seen Firecrests for the last few years in the same stretch of park at Bartons Green (North of Emsworth) and was thrilled that my partner spotted one as I had told him where to look in the shrubs/trees bordering Lavant Stream. This is winterbourne with never any water in it in the hot summers when my dog would have appreciated it.

Coal Tits and Long Tailed Tits are a delight to watch

My most exciting Nature encounter in 2025 was with Red Squirrels on the Isle of Wight - they are so much prettier and delicate than grey ones. I was walking the coastal path from Ryde, going west to Quarr Abbey. There is a bird hide as you approach the Abbey past woods in the grounds and you are guaranteed, in my opinion, to see Red Squirrels, as well as many birds, because people leave seeds and nuts and there is a 'Fluffy Tail Cafe' food box which had walnuts in it when I was there. As soon as I sat down in the hide, Red Squirrels came leaping along the windows and birds descended too - what a treat! When they had all had some food and gone away, I had a look in the food box and shut the lid and back came the Red Squirrels. One looked inside for ages obviously thinking I'd added more food ... I felt rather guilty for not having done so, but it decided to pick out a walnut and proceeded to eat it on top of the box. See my photos - that's a first for me and one ticked off my bucket list.

I ticked off Puffins a few years ago by taking a Serenity boat tour from Seahouses to the Farne Islands just a mile off mainland Northumberland. I highly recommend that too, not expensive or a long sea journey and you are guaranteed to see Puffins from May to July, popping up from their burrows and running the gauntlet of gulls trying to steal sand eels out of their beaks as they return to feed their Pufflings. Otters next -maybe in 2026?

One looked inside for ages obviously thinking I'd added more food ... I felt rather guilty for not having done so, but it decided to pick out a walnut and proceeded to eat it...

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Part 28: Walderton – Lordington Loop [nearly 3 miles]

Words by Lupo, photographs by Juliet Walker

A bright and dry November day at last! It was very frosty at first too but exhilarating for dogs. Our tails were up and we were keen to try a new route starting in the village of Walderton. We headed up two footpaths until we were plunged into a great field with carroty leaves and interesting smells. Now we were proper country dogs, though only four miles from home.

It was a day when the word 'park' featured a lot. As we came to the end of our second field we entered parkland – tall trees, open grassy spaces and a large house in the distance. This was Watergate Park and we were allowed to go through part of the grounds. I sensed a twitchiness about the humans which might have had something to do with the possibility of deer. Callie and I were on the alert and leads went back on.

Having crossed a bridge and walked through a small strip of woodland, we found ourselves at the edge of a road. Here we had to wait and not rush over to the gate that enticed us with possibilities of adventure lying beyond it. This gate led first to a Permissive Path – somewhere well-behaved, sheep-ignoring dogs are allowed to go. That was us! Another gate led into Watergate Hanger and freedom. Here tall trees clung onto the hillside, their leaves now coating the ground, and we explored happily. We then joined a narrow lane that led down towards Walderton, but we turned off into another field just before reaching the main road. Here we followed a fingerpost to Lordington and I began to sense that refreshments might not be far away.

First we had to negotiate a horse field. There were two of them in there, one minding its own business. The other looked as though it was very engaged in eating, but it had an eye mask on, so we couldn't really tell. We sidled past to the way out, right next to where it was standing, and tried to make an unobtrusive getaway. It was at this stage that the horse began taking an interest in us; maybe in a friendly way, but we weren't taking any chances. It is not easy to escape quickly when your owners are holding your lead and are trying to tackle a stile with some attempt at agility.

We emerged close to Lordington Park, and headed for their Tearoom. There was a very imposing, but stonily silent dog on the lawn outside. He was definitely on guard and not interested in us. This is an extremely dog-friendly place, where we could sit inside or out, but, being a cold day, we trooped in and were warmly welcomed and given some snacks. A leaflet said they also did luxury B & B, which no doubt means special Bones and Biscuits. They also sold other tempting treats, like ice cream for dogs. My owner says I must mention that their hot food for humans was very good too.

On our way back we met a very rumbustious and large puppy, who had escaped from his house into the horse field. He romped around us, perhaps trying to make friends, until someone came to rescue him – and us. After that excitement we had an uneventful walk through the fields and over the road to Walderton and the car. It had been a shortish route but a good one so we'll definitely be back.

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Emsworth Community Centre

Update on the repairs and restoration to the Community Centre after the roof fire
The repairs to the Assembly rooms after the fire have been halted due to paperwork and other hurdles. However, after more assessments and reports we have now been informed that the repairs can recommence in January. This will unfortunately put us back a few weeks and the approximate handover is now moved to the end of March/beginning of April 2026.

Regular Activities
Pop into the centre office and ask for a What's On leaflet or check out our website to see all the activities including all the details on how to contact the hosts and more. There are various activities available including Pilates, Yoga, Art Groups, Dance and Music.

If you fancy starting a new activity or want to extend an existing one, there is always room for more. Room hire starts at a great low price. We have a selection of rooms to rent, with various sizes, prices and times, to include mornings, afternoons, evenings and weekends. Kitchen and café facilities are also available to rent.

Visiting the library or meeting up with friends.
The Galley Café is a great place to meet. Open with service on Tuesday mornings 10-12. However, if you fancy a cuppa and you're happy to help yourself, for just a £1 per cup in the donation box, you can enjoy a great little space to have a catch up and a cuppa. We are open to all the community throughout the day.

Tech Aid is back.
Any small job required for your technical devices can be sorted by our wonderful tech team. Come and find us in the Galley café, every Wednesday 11-12 starting from the 14 Jan, you can also get a cuppa for a £1 (see above) while you ponder over and correct your technical issues.

Dementia friendly Gardening is on the first Thursday of the month 3-4 pm.

The Centre Cinema
Films are to be notified and will be available on the website and Facebook when we have the list.

Our Community Cinema is at the heart of our social activity programme. Showings are 3:30 and 7:30 on the 2nd and 4th Monday of the month, so check out our website for all information, including trailers, times, and dates.

Quiz Night
We will be having another quiz night which will be hosted by the Centre on 30 Jan 2026, start time 8.00pm. Arrive by 7:30 to get settled before we start and bring your own booze and nibbles.

www.emsworthcommunitycentre.org.uk

Book your Celebration party with kitchen facilities.

Check out our newly redecorated Lumley room / dance studio with acoustic panels to reduce sound echo. For more information or to book an appointment to view the venue please contact us on the details below

Check the website www.emsworthcommunitycentre.org.uk email on Info@emsworth-communitycentre.org.uk or call us on 01243 373805 10:00 -1.30. We are located behind the Fire Station on North Street, Emsworth, through the public car park into Emsworth Community Centre's private carpark.

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Havant Camera Club

Words by Carrie Davidson

The Autumn season has been very successful with a good number of returning members plus some new ones, to invigorate a sense of learning and passion for photography.

There have been some excellent speakers: Pete Whieldon provided an insightful talk about cold weather photography and was accompanied by two of his recued owls who sat quietly on their perches during the evening.

Delicate Landscape - Stephen Frost

The most notable speaker was Andy Skillen, a photojournalist and wildlife photographer. Andy has worked across the globe for organisations such as National Geographic and the BBC. He delivered an entertaining and passionate talk with stunning wildlife photography and even shared some rare photographs of David Attenborough on set.

The Christmas Challenge Trophy
The annual Christmas social took place with a knockout competition for members to vote for their favourite image. The images submitted demonstrated the variety and genres of photography that members enjoy.

Gladiator Frog - Gary Barrows

School Days - Carrie Davidson

The winner of The Challenge Cup was Carrie Davidson with an image of school children in China. Second place was Steve Frost with a stunning downland landscape. Runners up were Gary Barrows with his captivating image of a Gladiator Frog and Kay Tayor with a macro image of an Emperor Dragonfly.

Members Exhibition
We are excited to announce that we will be showcasing our work at a Members Exhibition to be held at The Spring in Havant. This will take place late February to March with dates to be announced soon on our website.

Upcoming Season
Details of upcoming talks can be found on the home page of our website and include Architectural Photography, Waterscapes of England and Wales and Astrophotography.

The club meets every Tuesday at Emsworth Community Centre starting at 7.30 pm and new members are welcome throughout the year. Havant Camera Club is the perfect place to learn, grow and share a love of photography. Full programme and further details can be found at www.havantcameraclub.co.uk. or just visit us on a Tuesday evening to see what we offer.

Emperor Dragonfly - Kay Taylor

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News from our MP

Happy New Year and best wishes to The Ems readers for 2026

I hope you all had a lovely Christmas with family and friends and I'd like to wish you a very happy new year! I've been active and visible in Emsworth throughout 2025 and this year I'll be continuing to work hard for you locally and in Westminster.

I was honoured to join Emsworth residents and lay wreaths at the Remembrance Sunday service at St James' Church and the Act of Remembrance held at Emsworth Memorial Garden on Armistice Day.

I condemned Labour's 2025 Autumn Budget as a £26 billion tax raid that punishes families, pensioners, small businesses and savers in Emsworth. I've also called on the Labour Government to apologise to pensioners for its handling of the Winter Fuel Payment fiasco. Supported by residents, I campaigned against Labour's removal of the payment. Labour partially u-turned, but many local pensioners are still missing out. If you agree that Labour should say sorry for their original disastrous decision, sign my petition at www.AlanMak.org.uk/WinterFuelApology

I've always been a big supporter of our small businesses and for National Beauty Week I visited Beauty Aesthetics in Emsworth and congratulated owner Joanna on the third anniversary of her business. Meanwhile ahead of Small Business Saturday last month, I visited Le Petit Pain in Emsworth, where I'm a regular customer, to catch up with owner Russ. Labour's tax-raising Budget makes life more difficult for independent traders. Conservatives will abolish business rates for high street shops and pubs if we win the next General Election.

Earlier this year we succeeded in getting Labour-led Havant Borough Council to think again after it proposed to introduce charges at various free car parks, including in Emsworth. Plus it wanted to introduce charges across all HBC car parks on Sundays and bank holidays. But now the Council's car park cash grab is back on the agenda. If you agree with me that it must reconsider, please sign my petition at www.alanmak.org.uk/ParkingCharges.

Looking ahead to 2026, I'll be organising more Q&A public meetings, including in Emsworth, plus my three popular community fairs - my 11th annual Community & Volunteering Fair, my 5th annual Health & Sports Fair and my 11th annual Jobs & Apprenticeships Fair. For dates and venues, please sign up to my e-newsletter www.alanmak.org.uk/newsletter.

Alan Mak visiting Joanna at Beauty Aesthetics

Would you like to go on a tour of Parliament and meet me for a Q&A session? They're very popular and more tours are taking place in 2026. Please register your interest at www.alanmak.org.uk/Tours

The best ways to stay up to date with the work I'm doing as your local MP all year round are to follow my social media accounts, especially Facebook (www.fb.com/AlanMakHavant), and sign up for my weekly residents' email community news update.

Finally, I'm providing free St. George and Union flags to constituents. To get yours, apply online at www.AlanMak.org.uk/flag.

You can also share your views on local and national issues with me by completing my new online survey at www.AlanMak.org.uk/survey.

Alan Mak MP, Member of Parliament for the Havant Constituency

ADVERTISEMENT

Round Up

2025 Update from The Friends of Emsworth Community Health (FECH)

Words by Theo Schofield, OBA, Chair of FECH

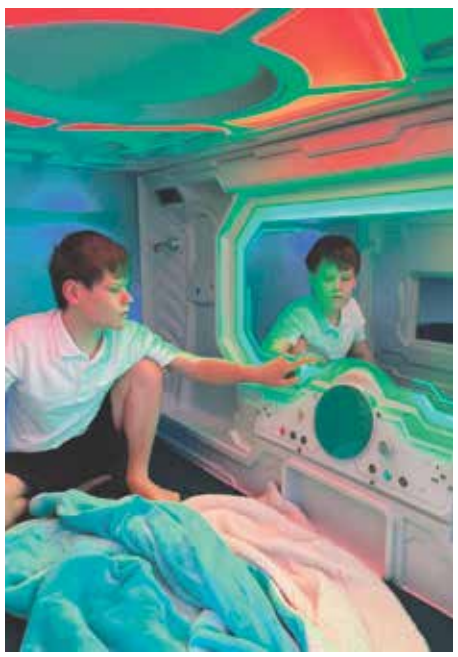
The Friends continues to support health and wellbeing initiatives and organisations across Emsworth. As we look forward to the year ahead, we wanted to reflect on our progress through 2025.

Last year brought positive change within our Trusteeship. We welcomed two new Trustees: Carla Butcher, Business Manager at Glenwood School, and Esther Ellis, a community pastor at One Church with close links to the Food Bank and Youth Club. Both bring valuable local insight, energy and fresh perspectives. Our long-standing Trustee and Treasurer, Reg Harnett, has also indicated his wish to step down after our next Annual General Meeting. Stuart Heartfield, who set up the Ems Valley Health Directory, has also resigned as Trustee. We remain grateful for everything they have done for the Charity.

Grant giving remains one of our most important contributions to the Community. In 2025, more than £27,000 was distributed from our endowment to organisations contributing to health and wellbeing in Emsworth. Funding supported a Sensory Pod and play park, alongside a wide range of voluntary groups. Beneficiaries included: the Macular Support Group; Singing for the Mind, supporting those living with dementia; the Residents Forum for activities for young people during school holidays; Emsworth Men's Shed for a new dust extractor; and Emsworth Good Neighbours, to support its volunteers.

The Sensory Pod at Glenwood School is now fully in place and already providing children with Special Educational Needs with a calm, supportive environment.

The Friends' Garden beside Emsworth Medical Practice continues to offer a peaceful green space in the heart of the town, open to all and available for hire. The Trustees extend sincere thanks to Sue Slight, whose dedication and care ensure the garden remains welcoming and well-maintained. We also support the Emsworth Health Alliance, whose quarterly meetings bring together those working across health and wellbeing to raise concerns and share ideas.



A valuable donation from The Friends has brought a sensory pod to Glenwood School

We are grateful for the continued support of our members. Further information on our work, including details of grants, an application form and details on how to become a member, can be found on our website: www.emsworthfriends.co.uk

Our next Annual General Meeting will be taking place at 4.30 pm on Tuesday 28 April 2026, at Emsworth Community Centre – we hope you can join us.

News form our Councillors (Pt 2)

Lulu Bowerman,

HCC Councillor for Emsworth and St Faiths

Christmas in Emsworth

It has been a very busy few months since my last article for The Ems. It is always great to be able to talk about our community events and in the last four weeks we have had the Christmas lights switch on and the Carols around the Lobsterpot tree – two events that really bring together Emsworth residents of all ages to celebrate Christmas.

The Christmas lights switch on took place on 28 November and once again brought local families together to listen to children from the three local primary schools sing their chosen carols and wait for the arrival of Father Christmas on his sleigh into the village, while being entertained by the great team from St James' Church. After the countdown the lights were switched on by the youngest child from each of the three schools with help from Father Christmas before he made his way to the Grotto to meet some of the local children. Another special occasion to start Christmas celebrations in Emsworth.

Carols around the Lobsterpot tree were held on the Quay on a beautiful sunny, cold December day on Saturday 16th and were really well attended by many local residents in fine voice and led once again by the wonderful Village Voices choir. All monies collected were for the RNLI with welcome refreshments from Flintstones.

We start planning for the Christmas events well in advance - co-ordinating all the different people involved with the lights switch on and checking permissions with Emsworth Slipper Sailing Club. These involve use of the Quay for the Lobsterpot tree for the six weeks it's in place and organising when the small team can get together to build the tree in late November and also to dismantle it in early January. We are always grateful to ESSC for their support.

So many people are really pleased to see the tree and knowing it is so loved makes it all worthwhile. It is very special to see the Lobsterpot tree at all times of day but particularly at sunset with the lights on and Emsworth Harbour as a backdrop.

My thanks as usual go to the small group of unsung heroes from our town who give their time and energy to build the Lobsterpot Tree, decorate the Square and to lead the logistical support team for the Christmas events. Paul and Dave and Brad and Dave – we couldn't do it without you!

Highways

Part of my Cabinet portfolio responsibilities at Hampshire County Council is Highways and I have been very involved with the new junction on M27 Junction 10 and the motorway closure over the Christmas holiday from 24 December to 4 January. This has enabled cutting through the existing motorway and a new concrete underpass to be slid into place which will create a fully functioning junction which can be accessed from east and west and enable access to the east and west carriageways. The work began on the evening of 24 December and the underpass was in place on the morning of 27 December. A great piece of engineering and co-ordinated working with other organisations! Full details with time lapse videos can be found on bit.ly/3YPUoMA.

I am pleased to announce that some additional funds have been allocated for a 'Safer Roads' campaign in Hampshire to include line re-painting, overgrown vegetation clearance and road sign improvements and cleaning. I shall be asking officers to inspect sites in Emsworth. I am also hoping this will include the road surfaces around the roundabout here.

Councillor grant

I still have some funds remaining from my County Councillor grant so if you have a local project or cause that requires some financial support, please write to me initially at lulu.bowerman@hants.gov.uk or check the application process at https://www.hants.gov.uk/community/grants/grants-list/county-councillor

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Heritage

Emsworth's Oyster Boom

Words and pictures by Mike Blatch

For the best part of the 19th century the oyster business was a profitable but largely ungoverned Wild West. Unlike fishing, which from the time of George 1 in the early 1700s imposed severe fines on undersized fish, oyster dredging was a free-for-all. Oysters were abundant throughout Chichester Harbour and the coastal waters of the south coast and France. An oyster smack (boat designed to dredge and store oysters) would roam freely, dredging up oysters where they chose, although this wasn't without conflict.

As the industry started to boom in the early 1800s conflict intensified as the natural beds became overfished. The tension was often between French and English oystermen, with both countries impounding boats and clashing in conflicts at sea. In 1843 a Convention was signed between the two countries that laid out the ground rules, specifying rights within each country's waters, regulating the size and type of gear used and, perhaps most notably, banning oyster dredging during the months of April to September. This initiative allowed young oyster spats to establish themselves and naturally occurring beds to regenerate.

Whilst the 1843 Convention was a step forward, the natural oyster beds of the harbour had been raked clean by the mid 1800s. In 1871 the Emsworth Fishery Order was introduced. This legislation was designed to protect and improve the local oyster and mussel fisheries. It was a huge step forward in the way the oyster trade could be managed. Oyster beds are naturally occurring but the new legislation protected oyster

lays, which are planned beds where young oysters are laid down by the oystermen to allow them to grow over a few years. In addition, the new control allowed oystermen to build oyster ponds all along the shoreline. The ponds had gravel or concrete bottoms and a low wooden wall around them, often with a sluice gate. Oyster ponds enabled the oystermen to keep dredged oysters covered with water at low tide, to clean them and to grade them according to their readiness for market.

In 1875, JD Foster arrived on the oyster scene. Foster was a shrewd businessman and the son of an already established boat builder. His oyster smack designs revolutionised the capabilities and capacity of the boats. Taking inspiration from the fishing boats sailing out of New England and Canada, Foster designed boats that were faster, more seaworthy and highly efficient for the time. They have been referred to as 'some of the finest fishing vessels to sail from an English port'. The pinnacle of his achievement was reflected in the ship named *Echo*, which was launched in 1901. The ship was 110 feet long with steam power on board to winch the sails, haul the dredges and pump water in and out of her two 90 ton oyster storage tanks. This could prove especially useful when coming back across the Chichester sand bar when pumping out the tanks gave her an extra 18 inches of freeboard (height from the water to the top of the boat's hull).

Foster was not alone in his revolution of the Emsworth oyster business. Jack Kennett was a notable local trader and

oyster operator who also traded in winkles, cockles, sand and gravel. Kennett operated three oyster smacks whilst Foster ran eight at the peak. As the industry boomed in the late 1800s, the value and quantity of oyster ponds boomed with it. At its peak the Emsworth oyster business was shipping around 100,000 oysters to London each week. Both Foster and Kennet bought up a large number of the oyster ponds on the foreshore. These were prime estate as it allowed market ready oysters to be transported quickly to the train station to meet orders efficiently.

The Emsworth of the late 1800s was a busy, energetic coastal town. Shipbuilding was thriving, the oyster trade booming, gravel was dredged, prawns, cockles, winkles and mussels were all fished in the harbour and the five mills (John King's steam powered mill was no longer operational by this time) were operating. Accounts of the time tell us of the clear water that flowed over shingle and eel grass out in the channels where shrimpers pushed their nets at low tide.

Sadly, the oyster trade was devastated in 1902 with the reorganisation of the sewage system by Warblington Urban District Council that pumped raw sewage out across market-ready oysters. The death of the Dean of Winchester due to poisoning from Emsworth oysters signalled the end of the oyster boom although the oyster smacks still dredged out at sea. Sadly today, despite all the understanding we have of the environment, our harbour is suffering from pollution, perhaps more than ever before.

Timber traction engine at JD Foster's yard (top), a group of Emsworth oystermen on the shore (above). Aerial view of Hendy's Quay (below left).

The oyster restoration project that is currently in progress (see P12) is a small but very positive step forward and we must keep the pressure up to reduce and control the unacceptable levels of pollution.

The oyster business of Emsworth cannot be fully told in a short article, so perhaps we will visit other aspects another time.

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Special Feature

Remembrance, Recognition and Respect

Words and images by Juliet Walker

Emsworth is deeply invested in its Remembrance events, all of which were well supported last November as usual. Even the weather was kind for them despite the uncertain forecast.

The parade to St James' Church for the service was very impressive, from the disciplined way in which even the youngest members of the Scouting movement waited for the start at the far end of Queen Street to the enthusiasm and pride of the large crowd that gathered in the Square to watch them go past in their uniformed groups, accompanied by soldiers from Baker Barracks and led out by Horndean Band. The day also had two important milestones: it was the first time a girl has carried the Union Flag in the parade – Girl Guide Amber having this honour - and was the last time that Dave Jupp was organising the event, a demanding role he has expertly filled for the past ten years.

Two days later, on Armistice Day, it was the turn of the service in Emsworth Memorial Garden, which was looking very smart thanks to both the voluntary gardening group and to Norse SE. Here respect was shown in all areas, from the impeccably behaved school children to the passing builders who doffed their hard hats for the two-minute silence. The thoughtful address by Rev Andrew Sheard, the ceremonial laying of wreaths round the memorial statue and the mellow sound of the cornet all added to the reflective mood.

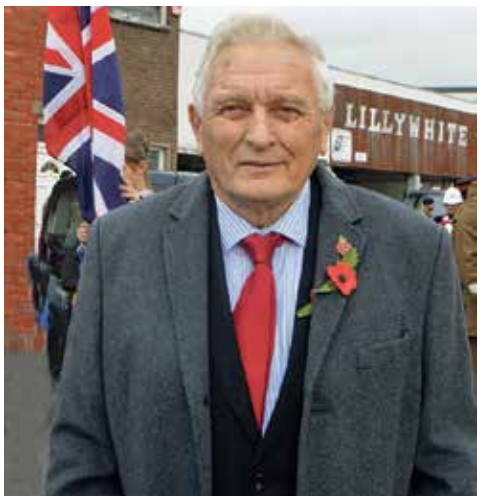
The parade takes the scenic route along the millpond

Waiting patiently for the parade to start

Horndean Band drummers lead through the Square

The gardening team and some evidence of their hard work

Rev Andrew Sheard and Union flag bearer Amber - first girl to hold this role in Emsworth Remembrance parade



Dave Jupp - Parade Organiser

Wreath Laying at the Memorial Garden

Just a few miles away at Fort Nelson we were lucky to have Standing with Giants during November - a display of cut out silhouettes representing lost servicemen placed on different levels of the site. It was very striking, moving, and atmospheric.

Emsworth Residents Forum

Letter from the Chair

Words by Dwynwen Stepien,
Chair of the Emsworth Residents Forum

In a town like Emsworth we really value our buildings and spaces.

But it is a challenge. Funding is not easily come by and there are lots of barriers to getting things done. Here are a few examples from 2025.

In March this year, Emsworth came within a breath of losing its Community Centre. A fire tore through the original 1865 school building, and for a moment it looked as though we might lose one of our cherished community assets. Miraculously, the damage was contained to the two assembly rooms. The library was untouched, and thanks to the extraordinary efforts of staff, volunteers, and the wider community, the rest of the centre reopened just eight days later.

Progress since then has been far from straightforward due to insurance delays. But at long last, the works are moving forward. If all goes to plan, the assembly rooms will reopen in April, welcoming groups back home and restoring the centre to full strength.

Across the Emsworth roundabout, however, progress has been far more visible. The refurbishment of the old GP surgery — an eighteenth century house — has moved at real pace. This ambitious, community focused partnership will support young people to meet their aspirations and lead fulfilled, confident lives. With its aim of helping young people reintegrate into mainstream schooling, it is a forward thinking project that we are proud to have at the heart of our town. We look forward to the opening of Liftoff in early 2026.

However, progress has been slower further north of the roundabout. Major improvements have been planned for the Recreation ground pavilion on Horndean Road for many years. A dedicated working group has been pushing this project forward, and most of the funding is now in place. Unfortunately, bureaucratic delays have meant that groups have been waiting longer than hoped. The refurbishment and ground improvements are currently planned for autumn 2026. Let us hope that the coming year finally brings the progress this well-lused and much loved recreation area deserves — a space enjoyed by growing numbers of children, young people, and adults alike.

Finally, a good news story comes in the shape of the Emsworth town clock. The article on the front page shows how layers of bureaucracy can get in the way of common sense; and how a local person with a passion for the town can find a solution and retain another important community asset, our town clock in St Peter's Square.

Why do these improvements and refurbishments matter?

Because Emsworth is, at its heart, a caring and vibrant community — a place where dozens of voluntary groups, formal and informal, give their time, energy, and compassion to support people of all ages and backgrounds. For those groups to thrive, we must look after the buildings and spaces that make their work possible.

Managing our town's assets well isn't just about maintenance, it's also about stewardship. The community centre, the outreach education centre, the recreation ground, the town clock — each one is part of the fabric of Emsworth. How we care for these places says something about who we are and what we value.

As we move through 2026, let us watch the progress of these projects with optimism. And let us also watch the progress of the Town Council campaign, exploring whether a more local, community focused structure could help us get things done better —for the people and places that make Emsworth home.

With best wishes for 2026. Dwynwen

In March last year, Emsworth came within a breath of losing its Community Centre

Emsworth Residents Forum

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Current and back copies of The Ems can be viewed online at: https://archive.org/search?query=emsworth+residents+forum

Please note that we have no connection with any other Emsworth websites or social media outlets.

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Please send letters, press releases and news items to David Harris, Editor: editor.theems@outlook.com Tel 01243 378215 or by post to the above address. The editor reserves the right to edit any submitted material.

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Autumn 2026	Friday 25 September	Thurs 8 October
Winter 2027	Wednesday 23 December	Thurs 7 January

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Dan Grove - (Environment)

Andrew Caple

ERF PUBLIC MEETING DATES
Election Hustings

Tuesday 28 April 2026; 7 pm; Emsworth Baptist Church (to be confirmed)

A chance to meet some of the candidates for the local elections due to be held on Thursday 7 May 2026.

AGM

Thursday 11 June 2026; Emsworth Community Centre

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Emsworth Residents Forum

Emsworth Community Garden

During the winter season our focus in the garden is on projects rather than growing.

In October we applied for and were awarded a grant by the Havant Lottery Community Fund to make accessibility improvements in the garden. Work will start on this in the New Year and will include new paving slab pathways and improved access to the water supply in the garden. These changes will make it easier for those with disabilities to access the whole garden.

New planting beds are being constructed in the polytunnel ready for the spring season planting and the outdoor beds are being prepared with organic (seaweed) fertiliser. The fruit trees in our orchard have been pruned and wild grass planted last year has now matured thanks to mild temperatures and rainfall. Our updated management plan for the garden was approved and signed by Havant Borough Council earlier this month, and we are grateful for their continued support.

We now have over 20 volunteers who regularly work in the garden so why not come along and join us? It's a good safe social space to get some exercise and fresh air and meet new friends. There is always plenty to do! From January you will also be able to support us by donating your green token to Emsworth Community Association on the Community Matters Scheme in Waitrose, Havant.

If you would like to join us please contact Kathy Parker on WhatsApp (07415 378564) or just pop along on Wednesday afternoon or Saturday morning. The entrance to Emsworth Community Garden is between 171 and 173 Victoria Road.

Keep Emsworth Special – with our own Town (Parish) Council

By Dwynwen Stepien, Chair, ERF

Have a Voice, Have Your Say
Emsworth is a caring, vibrant community with a unique shoreline, thriving shops, great food and cultural life. However, big changes are coming. With local government reorganisation, Havant Borough Council will disappear and Emsworth will be absorbed into a much larger Greater Portsmouth Unitary authority. Without strong local representation through a local Town council, Emsworth risks losing its distinct identity.

Protect Emsworth's Character
An Emsworth Town Council will be run by local people and will help safeguard:
- Our green spaces
- Our unique town centre
- Decisions on planning, infrastructure, and environment

Without a local Town council, developments could be imposed without local input.

A Town Council will invest in our Community by bringing in ringfenced funding for community facilities. The typical cost of a Town Council is less than £100 per year for a Band D household — under £2 a week. Town Councillors elected by residents decide:
- what services or improvements to prioritise
- which grants and funds to access for investment

If you care then get involved by completing Havant Borough Council's consultation for Emsworth. Visit: www.havant.gov.uk/cgr Residents wishing to support the campaign can contact: ERF Chair – chair.erf@gmail.com

Can you help The Ems?

Volunteer contributors wanted
The Ems would be interested in hearing from readers who would like to write short articles (300-500 words) for The Ems. This could be a one off article or a regular column. Articles should be original, exclusive to The Ems and be of local interest.
Please contact David Harris, Editor. Email: editor.theems@outlook.com

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By Suzy Gardiner, Sports Correspondent
Email: sport.theems@gmail.com

Emworth's Own Badminton Star

I am delighted to pass on this news from Sue Tooke who continues to dominate this sport:

"I am proud to say I have just won the Nationals Badminton Masters over 65s at the end of last month so I am officially number 1 in the UK for singles over 65s.

I have just moved up to the 65s this season starting September 2025 and have played several tournaments since then winning 7 gold and 3 silver medals so far. I am training hard now for the European Championships 2026 with hopes to achieve my best result so far. Fingers crossed. I had a close loss against this year's world champion two years ago so I am training hard."

Our ongoing good wishes to Sue in her training and competitions.

B Mandlik

Bourne55 Archery

An update from our brilliant archery club serving our local area.

The new archery year started on 1 October and lots of people rejoined our thriving archery club despite the Archery GB prices going up. We have just finished a six week Introduction to Archery course which has given us five new members, three of whom are sisters so there's going to be a spot of rivalry there. We supported a few events over the summer, including Stansted Summer Fair where over 300 people took part in archery. Lordington Fete saw 100 people participate and the Thorney Island Family Day gave mostly children a chance to shoot. In April we hosted a day's archery for the outdoor pursuits course from the University of Chichester.

Our next course will be in January, with details on the website (see below) for anyone interested. The fees are £60 for a 6 week course. It's designed to give archers the knowledge and skills required to join a club's shooting line and take part in World Archery rounds, ranging from 18 metres to 165 metres. Club shoots are on a Tuesday 6.30 to 8.30 pm and Saturday 10.30 to 12.30 pm at the Leisure Centre in Southbourne.

Full details of Bourne55 shoots, events, history of the club and much more can be found on their vibrant new look website: www.bourne55.com

Emsworth Cricket Club

By Howard Fountain, Chair

Memories of Christmas and the New Year may still be residing comfortably in our short-term memory banks but, for the cricket club, January heralds the build up to the coming season.

The first instalments are the indoor nets sessions for the different club sections. The starting dates for these are as follows:

- U9s will be on Mondays 6-7 pm at Warblington School starting on Feb 2nd.
- U 11s and U13s will be on Thursdays 6-7.30 pm, again at Warblington starting on 5th Feb.
- The men's session follow the U11s and U13s on Thursdays from 7.30-0 pm starting on Thurs 5th Feb.
- The ladies' sessions will begin at Warblington on Sat 31st Jan 9-10 am with other sessions being on both Saturdays and Wednesdays.

All new and current players are welcome to join in. Please see our social media pages or website for further details.

Get Up and Go

Get up and Go is a Havant Borough Council project offering physical activity opportunities to residents of Havant Borough.

We know that physical activity can bring a multitude of physical, mental, and social benefits to us all, and we try to provide a range of fun activities which utilise and help us appreciate our beautiful local area and help to make it as enjoyable and easy as possible to be active. Activities on offer include various weekly wellbeing walks, informative walks and talks, Pilates, walking football, parent and child boxing, female only boxing, walking netball, yoga, classes for over 60s, sessions for adults with Parkinson's and much more.

As part of the Get up and Go [GUAG] project we also deliver several other projects in Havant. Live Longer Better is a project for over 60s. If you're in your 60s, 70s or beyond, you can take positive steps now to improve your health and live longer, better. As part of this project, we are delivering a new Zumba Gold class in Cowplain, low impact dance at Bedhampton and beginners gym courses. We will be delivering a Live Longer Better event at Hayling Island Community centre on Wednesday 28 January. For more details, please visit our website. GUAG also received funding recently to deliver classes for adults with Parkinson's, funded by Parkinson's UK. Classes include Qigong and Strength and Balance.

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Interested in finding out what activities you could get involved in? Visit the Get up and Go website and visit the 'book activities' page for more information. Alternatively, if you would rather speak to someone from the project you can contact us on: infogetupandgo@havant.gov.uk or call us: 07720 076284

If you want to keep up to date with our project and what is happening locally, follow our Facebook page: 'Get up and Go Havant'.

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